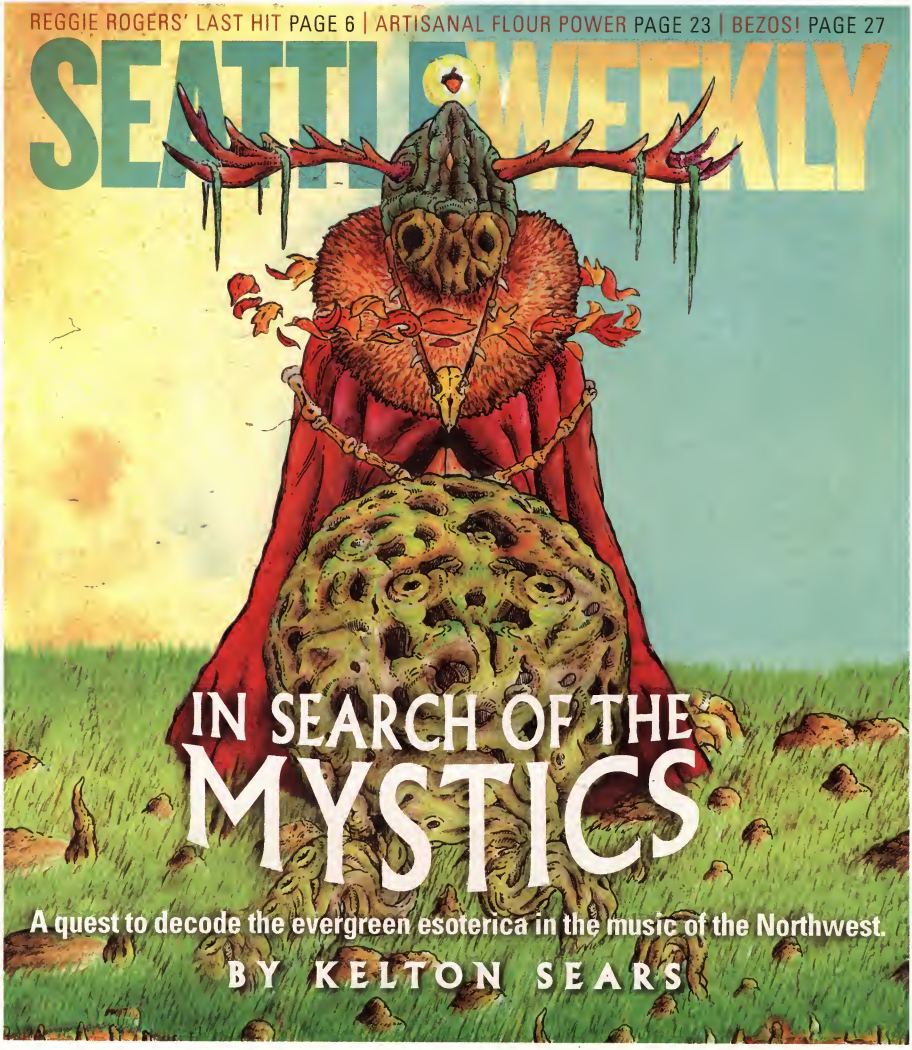
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SEATTLE WEEKLY



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BY KELTON SEARS

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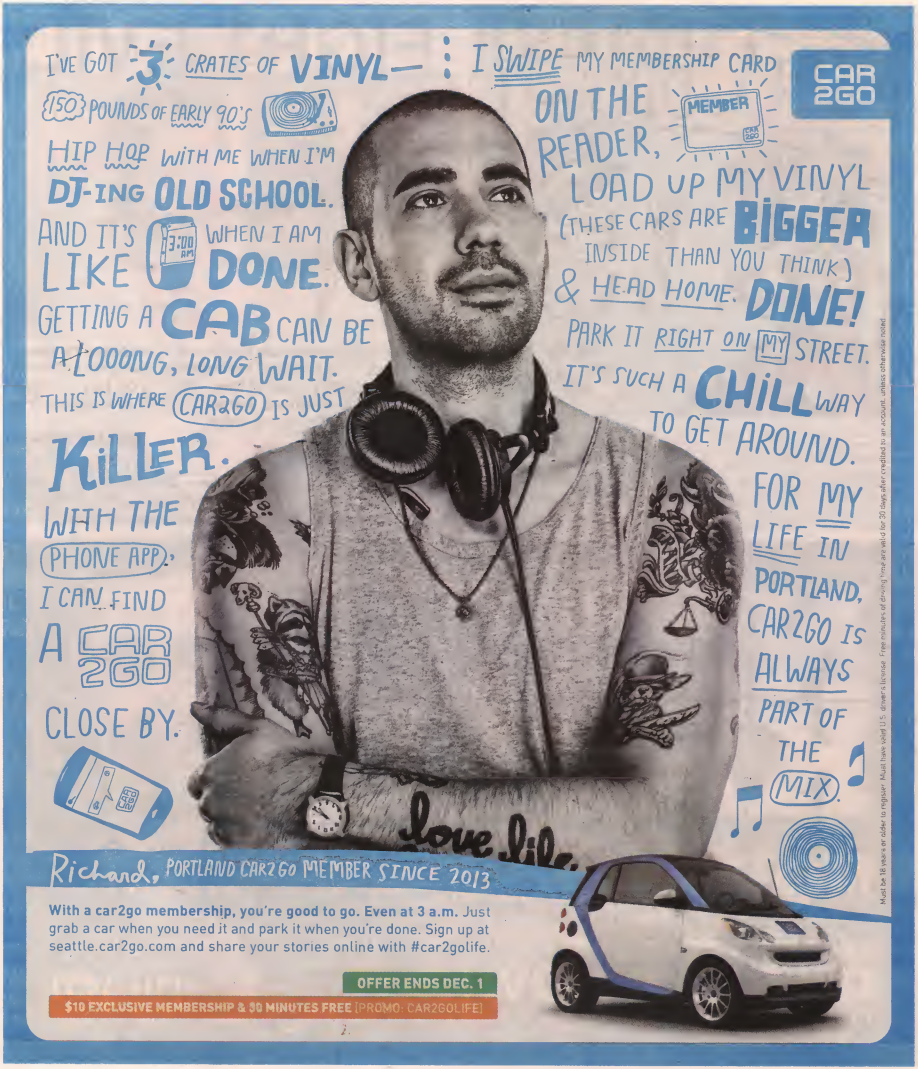
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Mark Baumgarten

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Managing Editor in Charge of News
Daniel Person

Senior Editor Nina Shapiro

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Ellis E. Conklin, Matt Driscoll, Kelton Sears

Editorial Intern
Alicia Price

Contributing Writers
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OPERATIONS

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PUBLISHER
Wendy Geldien

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news&comment

'I Told You I Was Sick'

In Washington graveyards, there are some epitaphs to die for.

BY ELLIS E. CONKLIN

Washington's cemeteries are alive with snappy exit lines and final granite-carved sentiments of the dearly departed, lingering imprints of a life etched in stone. And with Halloween upon us, it is wise to remember that getting in the last word is best left to the dead.

Seattle gravestone maker Dave Quiring recounts the intentionally cryptic epitaph of a Microsoft software engineer: "Press Any Key To Continue."

Quiring, owner of Quiring Monuments on Aurora Avenue, has been in the business of carving last words into stone for 50 years. "Most of us don't think about death, or about what we want to say at the end to be remembered," he muses. "A lot of it, of course, is mundane, the kind of expressions you see in Hallmark cards."

But not all.

At Mount Pleasant Cemetery atop Queen Anne Hill, a happy hour–loving tippler chose this for his stone: "It's 5 o'clock somewhere." Not far away, on a grassy knoll, another man echoes those boozy sentiments: "Life is too short not to have a little umbrella in your drink."

In a Tukwila crypt rests for all eternity a woman with an epitaph to rival W.C. Fields' famous "I'd Rather Be In Philadelphia." Hers reads: "I Told You I Was Sick."

A young man, his final resting place a Ritzville boneyard, distilled his life's uneventful journey down to a single empathic request. His epitaph: "Return to Sender." A 90-year-old gent buried six feet under at Lake View Cemetery on Capitol Hill didn't mince words either. His final comment: "Passed Out."

At Crown Hill Cemetery, a man in no apparent hurry to pass through the Pearly Gates offered this reluctant adieu: "Well . . . Goodbye"—a haunting, albeit quizzical counterpoint to the woman in a Spokane graveyard who had chiseled "Oh, Never Mind" on her own hunk of granite.

Who can resist (or forget) the cold, crisp last words of "Old Raymond," at peace in a cemetery plot in Vancouver, Wash.? His epitaph: "Enough said."

"I'd rather be upside down in a canoe," read the last words of a woman buried at Calvary Cemetery. Another woman at Mount Pleasant chose this: "No regrets, I love my Honda."

Then there's the wisenheimer James Frost, embedded in a Tacoma graveyard, whose (gallows-)humorous adios reads: "I've Been Down Before, But Not Like This."

Vanishing, Quiring says, are the more prophetic epitaphs, steeped in classic literature, poetry, or religion.



Neil Edwards drove his 1962 Studebaker like a bat out of hell around the cemetery he now lies in.

ROBERT STEVENS

The 72-year-old Quiring inscribed lines from Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" ("But I have promises to keep/And miles to go before I sleep") on his father's headstone. He happily shares what he intends for his own gravestone: "Death is my life."

Some epitaphs are profound, others tearful and touching. At Lake View Cemetery, groundskeeper Kevin Haley, trudging through thick fog, points out the grave of a woman named Ada, who lies beneath a large white marble stone, most of it fashioned into the shape of a piano. Intentionally, one of the 88 keys is missing.

But of most interest to the casual observer are the epitaphs that are downright flippant. "I'd rather be upside down in a canoe," read the last words of a woman buried at Calvary Cemetery. Another woman at Mount Pleasant chose this: "No regrets, I love my Honda."

Also at Mount Pleasant, where one of the implanted patrons ghoulishly observes "I See Dead People," a shiny, dark slab of granite rises from the grave of Neil and Geneva Edwards. Sculpted on the face of the stone is a perfect likeness of the 1962 Studebaker that Neil, the cemetery's owner, used to drive like a bat out of hell on the windy roads that criss-cross the 162-year-old graveyard. Their sweet so-long: "We've had a great ride."

In the same Queen Anne burial ground, beneath a tangle of evergreens, sits the grave of a man named Woody. Nothing else is written, only "Woody — 1939–1987." If every grave tells a story, one can only wonder what prompted this 48-year-old, or his next of kin, to christen his final resting place with a finely wrought replica of Marilyn Monroe, her skirt fluttering heavenward.

The world's graveyards are ripe with tales told of one's earthly time in this vale of tears—and often, even in death, wit prevails. On the tomb of a Pennsylvania spinster, the inscription reads: "No hits, no runs, no heirs."

Chiseled, fittingly enough, onto the headstone of an auctioneer named Jedediah Goodwin: "Born in 1828. Going! Going!! Gone!!! 1876."

Then there's the attorney buried in a Rockford, Ill., cemetery. His epitaph: "The Defense Rests." ■

econklin@seattleweekly.com

Reggie Rogers' Final Hit

BY RICK ANDERSON

His last day, like too many before it, was all fugged up. Which is to say fucked and brain-fogged up. Someone borrowed Reginald O'Keith Rogers' Rolls and Reggie did not know where it was.

The onetime all-America football player walked to a friend's house on East Yesler Way, and they went into the night looking for the prized 1983 two-tone Rolls-Royce. Hours later they returned empty-handed. At 5 a.m., Rogers crashed on the friend's couch. Almost literally. At 6´6˝ and nearly 300 pounds, Reggie Rogers had an impact on furniture like he once had on the football field.

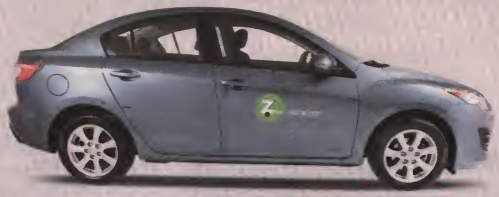
He did not go home to Beacon Hill that last Thursday because of another fugged-up day two weeks earlier. His impact that evening, October 7, was on his wife, who is 4´11˝. She married him two years ago, after the father of six was divorced in 2010. At their home on 15th Avenue South, she let a cop put his hands through her hair to see what Reggie had done. "I could feel a small bump on the top of her head," said the cop.

The wife said she woke up near midnight to the noise of Reggie in the living room yelling at the television set. She went to check and he began yelling at her. He accused her of trying to kill him by asking him to stop drinking alcohol. He ordered her to get more beer from the garage. Then he struck her on the head with a flashlight. Outweighed by 180 pounds, she dialed 911 and ran out the door. Reggie, in black shorts and a T-shirt, followed her out. He was on the sidewalk when police arrived. He said, oh, his wife was just mad about a woman who'd called him.

Rogers was booked at King County Jail for domestic violence. The next day his wife filed for a protection order to keep him away until they could meet in court. Jail was a familiar place for Rogers. His record includes a string of DUI convictions from the 1980s to the 2010s. One

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Reggie Rogers' Final Hit

» FROM PAGE 6

drunken accident, in 1988, was a neck-breaking 60-miles-an-hour crash that left three Michigan teen boys dead. That was a year after the University of Washington lineman had been the seventh player picked in the National Football League draft. A suddenly affordable alcohol habit diminished his game, and the negligent-homicide conviction cost him 12½ months in prison. The Detroit Lions also no longer needed a player who'd broken his neck. In the ensuing years, he played unremarkably for two other NFL teams and finished up in Canada.

By 1997, he was back in Seattle working construction jobs and wrestling demons. He had put the homicide behind him, he said, even if the victims' families hadn't. He preferred not to talk about his older brother Don, also an all-America and a first-round NFL pick, who was 23 when he died of cocaine poisoning at his 1986 bachelor party. "Everything started to go downhill as soon as he died," Reggie once allowed. "Every day, something happened." He vented about the injustice of not being named to

He deserved leniency, he told a judge, because when he played college sports, "I carried this whole team, this whole state, on my back."

the Husky Hall of Fame. On the Internet, when he Googled himself, he found "one of the biggest draft busts in NFL history." He wondered if a lasting football concussion was the source of his woes. He joined other players in a lawsuit against the league three years ago. "He is at increased risk of latent brain disease," his attorney said. Two months ago, the suit was settled for $765 million. Maybe Reggie could get help.

But he'd kept drinking, and driving. Last year he began 12 months in jail for his sixth DUI. He was arrested shortly after he was released from jail for his fifth. Convictions no longer seemed to matter. He deserved leniency, he told a judge, because when he played college sports, "I carried this whole team, this whole state, on my back."

He might have been out drinking and driving on his last night if he'd had his car. But the Rolls was nowhere in sight when he got up after a few hours and left. He was gone awhile, and then was seen having a cigarette on the friend's porch at noon. A half-hour later, a neighbor woman saw him sleeping and got a coat to put on him. Then she got close. Police and an aid car came, followed by the medical examiner. He was 49.

Toxicology tests are underway. Surely it had something to do with all those hits, the ones he took, and gave, in life. "I've had a lot of problems," he once conceded. "To be honest with you, the problems are still here right now, and they will probably still be with me when I'm done playing football." $W

randerson@seattleweekly.com

Championship Season in Seattle

SPORTSBALL

BY SETH KOLLOEN

Knock on wood, then read this: The Seahawks are 5/1 favorites to win the Super Bowl. According to Vegas, Seattle's major pro-championships drought—now 35 years long—has a 20 percent chance of ending on February 2.

Super Bowl champions tend to have an elite unit, and the Hawks' defense looks ready to play the part. The Seahawks' secondary was already the NFL's best last season, what was lacking was consistent pass rush. Pete Carroll's offseason shopping spree fixed that. Acquisitions Michael Bennett, Clinton McDonald, and Cliff Avril are the Hawks' top 3 quarterback sackers, combining for 12 sacks. The Hawks have 26 overall, third-best in the NFL.

The Seahawks are not the only locals with a shot at a championship.

University of Washington volleyball The Huskies are ranked No. 4 in the country, and, if they do win a championship, will do it right here in Seattle—the 2013 NCAA Volleyball Final Four is December 19 and 21 at KeyArena. Head coach Jim McLaughlin is the Jeff Bezos of volleyball; he's obsessed with metrics, learning, and constant improvement. He's built the Huskies into a perennial contender since arriving in 2001, including a 2005 national championship. Volleyball prodigy Krista Vansant handles the all-important outside hitter position (the person who spikes the ball into the opposing court); All-American Vansant chose Washington—and McLaughlin—over powerhouse programs like Penn State and Stanford.

Bishop Sankey The Washington football team won't match the volleyball team with a national championship, but running back Bishop Sankey has a chance to win the NCAA rushing championship, something no Husky has ever done. After his career-high 241-yard performance Saturday against Cal, Sankey is third in the country with 145.3 rushing yards per game.

Seattle Sounders FC Only an Ed Murray loss in the mayoral race could give Seattle a bigger Fall fall (or autumnal tumble) than the Sounders have perpetrated. Owners of the MLS' best record on September 13, the Sounders finished the regular season 0-4-3 and dropped to fourth in the Western Conference. By the time you read this, the Sounders' season could be over, having ended with a loss in Wednesday's wild-card game against Colorado. Or they'll have gotten their first win in more than a month and be prepping for a conference semifinal against Portland—hoping to repeat Los Angeles' 2012 feat of winning the MLS Cup from the #4 seed.

We have done it before. Here's a refresher of past Seattle sports championships:

Seattle Metropolitans: Stanley Cup, 1917
UW rowing: 1936 Olympics and 18 titles
Seattle Buchan Bakers, AAU Basketball: 1956
UW football: 1991
Seattle SuperSonics, NBA: 1979
Seattle Storm, WNBA: 2004, 2010
UW volleyball: 2005
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IN SEARCH OF THE MYSTICS

A quest to decode the evergreen esoterica in the music of the Northwest.

• BY KELTON SEARS •

"This is an everyday lesson in the damp, decaying, riotously fecund Northwest: The decomposition of dead things is what allows new life to grow."

—Matthew Offenbacher, "Green Gothic"

One day after the rainiest September day in Seattle recorded history, I drive into the forests of Tacoma to meet a black-metal band. After circling soggy gardens and a strange pagoda in Point Defiance Park a number of times, I realize that I'm terribly lost. ■ "We're way past all that, deeper in the woods," Michael Korchonoff tells me over the phone. "We're next to the rhododendrons." ■ Passing through a thick tunnel of interlocking firs and cedars, I find the band Alda waiting for me, standing in the rain. ■ Korchonoff, Alda's drummer and vocalist, shakes my hand. He apologizes for the clandestine rendezvous before instructing me that we'll actually be going even deeper into the forest for our chat. Jace Bruton, Alda's guitarist, says I can hop into his pickup. ■ Bruton is a burly, bearded Texan transplant to Washington. He talks with a good-ol'-boy twang, but has the aura of a Buddhist monk. Elk-hunting manuals and metal CD's are strewn about the cab. Bruton does all the hunting for Alda, singularly in charge of bringing meat back to the rural Pierce County property the band lives on and farms together.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN DIONISI

In Search of the Mystics

» FROM PAGE 11

Last weekend, Bruton's father shot a bear with a hunting bow. The guitarist quartered the bear, and the band has been enjoying the meat. It's a nice break from the elk, salmon, and trout Bruton usually brings in, says bassist Stephanie Knittel. Although the group's food supply isn't completely self-sustaining yet, that's the ultimate goal.

On the ride over, Bruton briefly explains the ecological hunting practices he abides by, guided by the literature of David Petersen, a well-regarded elk-hunting philosopher.

During Alda's performances, the band often places the skull of an animal Bruton hunted on a bed of tree boughs within a circle of old-growth bark. It's a deeply spiritual ritual for the band—a way to honor the animal's sacrifice for their sustenance and to bring a piece of the wild to the cities where they play. According to the members of Alda, the folk-influenced black metal they create is almost secondary to the band's larger purpose: to express the intense connection they feel to the Cascadian bioregion and the natural systems that sustain them.

When we get out of the truck, Bruton leads us all down a nonexistent path, swatting aside branches and sneaking through underbrush. On the backwoods trek, Korchonoff and I start to chat about the cover of Alda's album *Tahoma*. Created by Korchonoff's sister, it's an impressionist painting of salmon flowing downstream from Mount Tahoma—the native Lushootseed name for Mount Rainier—as a human skull and fish skeletons rest quietly on the riverbed in the corner. As Korchonoff explains, the cover symbolizes the living network that surrounds us: the water, the salmon, and the mountains.

The band members grew up together in Eatonville at the base of Mount Rainier. They moved to Tacoma after finishing school, but quickly felt alienated by urban life, where people "don't trust each other, and have no respect for where they live," as Korchonoff explains. To cope, the band drank themselves into a depressive haze and began to abuse drugs. After these episodes, they often found themselves back at home in Eatonville or in the woods. Realizing they hated city life and longing to return to a simpler way of living, they moved to the property they now live on, 40 miles outside of town.

During my conversation with Korchonoff, Bruton stops a couple of times to examine fresh deer prints on the trail.

"The place we're going to is a place we used to come to a lot when we lived in Tacoma," Korchonoff says before abruptly stopping in his tracks.

A bewildered look comes over his face.

"What the heck? Somebody lit a fire here?"

The base of the enormous tree in front of us is charred black. Its roots are damaged—gnarled, withered, and coated in fresh ash.

Bruton bends down and feels around in the soil, searching for clues. He pulls up a burnt piece of cardboard with half of the Corona logo on it.

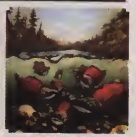
"Some fucking idiots partying probably lit a fire and had no idea what they were doing," Bruton says staring at the cardboard. "This is what we were talking about—because of the proximity to the city, you get sketchy people doing fucked-up things like this."

We move on to another spot—a small, damp clearing with a mossy fallen log where we finally sit down.



KEENAN SIMS

"Where we are and where we exist and where we're from—those are heavy things that we typically go about unaware of in our modern world."





PW ELVERUM & SUN

"So," Korchonoff says, folding his hands. "What did you want to talk about?"

The English word "mysticism" is derived from the Greek word μυω, which means "to conceal." It's a broad term, used to describe the secretive, esoteric nature inherent in Jewish Kabbalah, healing crystals, and *Led Zeppelin IV*. Like many young people in 1971 pondering what the hell ZoSo meant and whether or not Jimmy Page actually worshipped Satan, I found myself in a similar situation in modern-day Seattle.

I began to notice that much of the music and art of our region seemed to contain an undercurrent of—for lack of a better word—mysticism. What fascinated me was how independent these musicians and artists were of one another.

Metal bands, rappers, psych-rockers, throat singers, painters, and performance artists that had no connection beyond shared geography all seemed to be evoking the same things: dark wildernesses, forgotten esoteric concepts, and shamanistic coded rituals.

I never suspected these people to be Jimmy Page-style Satanists, but I often wondered if they were pagan. Druids at the very least.

These Northwest mystics all seemed to be pointing at some larger, meaningful thing floating just out of reach—an evergreen obelisk of truth that I could decipher if there weren't so much damn coastal fog in the way. It felt as though these artists were trying to tell me something very important, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it.

So I embarked on a quest. I reached out to many of these Northwest mystics and asked them to elucidate these mysteries. I asked them, very simply, "What does it all mean?"

I was pleased to discover that despite their varying degrees of separation and stylistic differences, they had very similar answers.

The following is an account of my quest, which I've subdivided into three convenient "Branches of Northwest Mysticism." Note that the musicians and artists interviewed do not subscribe to these branches. Rather, they are intended as a way to organize the overriding principles these artists expressed, which, as you will find, all point to the same larger concept.

Branch I
Eco-Mythologizers

"Hello. I am a self-mythologizer. That's just how it is. I am responsible for a fairly tall stack of records and CDs full of songs about my own metaphorical adventures and wrestling matches with big questions, songs that usually take place in a romantic, fictional nature."

—Phil Elverum,
Dawn: Winter Journal

Phil Elverum is a wonderfully strange human. He wears flip-flops no matter the season, and often strikes the yogic Tree Pose when he performs, a stance in which one foot is placed firmly on the opposite leg's inner thigh.

Elverum is perhaps the most prolific of the Eco-Mythologizers who have sprung up in the Northwest: people who sacralize our wildernesses by layering dense, moss-covered myth onto them. This mythical Northwest serves as a setting to explore a sort of deep, sometimes spiritual understanding of ecology and the part humans play in our very large natural systems.

In his songs, Elverum always sings in a kind of hushed coo, like a timid bird. What happens behind that coo can vary wildly, from soft acoustic-guitar strumming to ear-explodingly loud lo-fi metal, depending on which era of Elverum's 17-year career you're listening to.

Elverum pressed the beautiful handcrafted LPs in his Mount Eerie project himself—one of which comes with an enormous foldout poster of a drawing of a man in a foggy forest landscape. It holds the record for the world's largest album cover.

When Elverum sings, it's often from the perspective of some sort of nature spirit. In his "black metal" album *Wind's Poem*, it's the wind; in his most recent, *Ocean Roar*, it's the ocean. Sometimes he sings to the place he lives, Anacortes, as in the song "The Place I Live." His songs are incredibly wordy, stream-of-consciousness liturgies about Elverum's place in the natural world.

Place is a concept Elverum gets reverent about. "Place plays a lot into what it feels like to be alive," he tells me over the phone from his home. "Making these songs about place and trying to get people to acknowledge this connection in themselves to where we are and where we exist and where we're from—those are heavy things that we typically go about unaware of in our modern world."

In *Dawn: Winter Journal*, a long memoir bundled with one of his records, Elverum details his wistful 2002 trip to northern Norway, where he intended to live in a cabin on his own, Thoreau-style, in an attempt to align his fantasies with his reality and discover some sort of overarching nature-truth. He mostly spends the book complaining about the guy who recently stole his girlfriend, and how cold it is outside while

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chopping wood in the near-Arctic. But there are occasional glimpses at revelation:

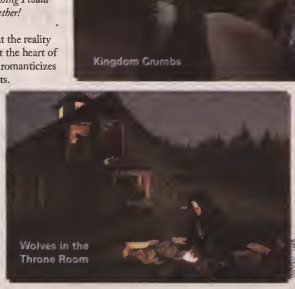
I am starting to get a feeling for this place as 'A WHOLE' with me IN it rather than a participant in a game or a spectator. I am connected in ways I'll never comprehend . . . in fact, it's pointless contemplating about it because even right now it's all happening. We (meaning me and everything I could see) are doing this (meaning me and everything I could see, or feel, or whatever, you know) together!

This sort of joyful bewilderment at the reality of ecology and natural systems lies at the heart of Elverum's mysticism, which actively romanticizes the landscape to mythological heights.

"I'm uneasy with it, and also, at the same time, I'm really into it," Elverum says. "I'm not a spiritual person, and I'm not into some sort of formalized spiritual system, but my angle is: This planet that we live on, and these animals that we are, is crazy amazing. There's definitely a sacredness to the wild that I feel is worth focusing on. When I put a personality behind the wind, the ocean, or whatever element in the nonhuman world, it's just a shortcut to that sense of wonder."

These strange tales Elverum tells about himself, the surrounding wilderness, and his pilgrimage to Norway made him in many ways a Northwestern Led Zeppelin to me as I grew up. Even though all his deep lore is just a story, it acts as a very helpful frame to think about much bigger things. Big questions that are more easily wrestled with in a "fictional nature." Questions like "Why am I here? What is my place within this place?"





My friend Ben told me about a show he saw Elverum play in Olympia with the band Wolves in the Throne Room. According to Ben, it ended with a Christmas tree from WITTR's set being thrown into the audience. The tree was promptly ripped to shreds. Elverum confirms this.

"I feel a special kinship with Wolves in the Throne Room," he says. "I do think we are very similar in the kind of 'making sacred this place where we live' and finding ways of connecting to it in a deeper way."

Wolves in the Throne Room are one of the few Northwestern bands with an even thicker mysticism than Elverum. In the metal community, uttering the name "Wolves in the Throne Room" is very much like saying "Voldemort" in the Harry Potter novels: It can instantly hush rooms, elicit intense debates, or draw cultlike adoration. Or sometimes a mixture of all three.

According to the biography at wittr.com, the band was conceived by Nathan Weaver "at an Earth First rendezvous in the Cascade mountains of Washington State." Nathan and his brother Aaron then "moved to a dilapidated farmstead on the outskirts of Olympia, WA. The creation of their farm-stronghold, called Callicope, would be intrinsically linked to the development of Wolves in the Throne Room." On this farmstead, the two allegedly live a simple life, chiefly composed of organic farming and late-night black-meral dirges about the Earth.

Whether or not the group's backstory is true is somewhat irrelevant—the concept is a sticky one: *Nature is powerful, and we'd best respect it. Maybe you should even move to a farm.* Even though it's difficult to make out anything WITTR are singing about (or, I should say, screaming about), the ideas still filter through. The "Cascadian Black Metal" they make has been incredibly influential conceptually and sonically in the metal world. I spotted a WITTR sticker on the back window of Michael Korchonoff from Alda's car.

These values are actively lived out at the Yule Gathering in Olympia, a festival Alda has taken part in for the past two years. The band members all agree these are among their favorite shows. Held on the winter solstice, the longest night of the year, the Yule Gathering collects many of these ecologically conscious metal bands in a space appropriately named The Hall of the Woods. I have never actually seen the place, but various rumors state that it had a tree growing through it, that it once belonged to a sacrificial hippie cult, and that a grimoire detailing its fetid history exists somewhere (Korchonoff says his friend claims to have read it once).

This is where Alda got to play with many of the bands that initially sparked their own eco-spirituality—bands like Fauna (whose members perform wearing animal hides while sometimes handing out meat they smoked themselves) or Echtra. Many of the bands at Yule engage in some sort of nature-reverent ritualism, steeped in a self-created mythos.

Despite the occult overtones, the idea girding the Yule Gathering is the same as Elverum's overarching idea: We are all just a part of a huge ecological system, and it's important to recognize our tiny, wondrous place within it.

Also, modernity kind of sucks.

BRANCH II
Cryptic Apocalyptics

"It's the end of all time, there's nothing to do/If the world should die, then what do we do/ About nothing at all?"

—Kingdom Crumbs, "Much Ado About Nothing"

When I meet hip-hop group Kingdom Crumbs, the first thing we talk about is *Grand Theft Auto V*.

Jarv Dee, one of the group's four rappers, just got the game and has been terrorizing San Andreas gleefully with the aid of cheat codes. Fellow MC Jerm D starts laughing about his past *GTA* exploits—exploding cars, rooftop rocket-launcher sessions, helicopter hijackings.

A half-hour later, our conversation remains just as apocalyptic. There's less laughing, though.

"The year the album dropped, there was all this 2012 shit—it was a huge fucking deal," Tay Sean says after swilling some PBR, surrounded by his crew in a booth at a local bar. "They made a Hollywood movie about it. I never take those things at face value, but you know, you start reading about the Mayans and Nostradamus or whatever."

Everyone in the group goes quiet. "It's not like 'Yo, I believe the world's gonna end,'" Tay Sean says. "It's just like, what if?"

Kingdom Crumbs are just one of a fascinating crop of Seattle-based hip-hop artists who are using highly cryptic, cosmic, esoteric language to confront the forces leading humanity to its seemingly imminent demise. Like the Eco-Mythologizers, these Cryptic Apocalyptics are creating their own unique coded universes. While the forests of the Northwest may play into them, these worlds are culled largely from ancient histories, New Age metaphysics, and a hybrid of science fiction and science fact.

The members of Kingdom Crumbs are whip-smart; throughout our conversation, they cite Greek history, neuroscience, anthropological studies, Dogon stilt dancers, the star Sirius B, crop circles, the I Ching, and the ancient civilization of Khemet. All these play into the dense landscape upon which Kingdom Crumbs have built their kingdom. A thorough academic exegesis of the group's self-titled first album could be a 6,000-word article of its own.

"When you start researching this stuff, and when you start seeing this recurring pattern in all these different cultures over a long period of time, you start to realize there must be something to this stuff," Tay Sean says. "It's triangulating that information and figuring out what's truth."

Listening to Kingdom Crumbs, a lot of triangulating is necessary. The group drops esoteric knowledge and mystical truths like other hip-hop groups drop the word "swag." Right off the bat, from the opening line of *Kingdom Crumbs*, you know you're in for a ride: "A higher consciousness is linked intrinsic/We's flyin' mystic/ Now homie that ain't science fiction/That's scientific," Tay Sean says before the group descends into its cloudy, extraterrestrial world of hidden knowledge.

The root of all this mysticism should sound familiar by now. It started with some "big questions."

Jerm D grew up in the church, and was always interested in his purpose, where he came from, and why he was here. Through the years, that search led him to history books, where he found Egypt popping up frequently. The stories of the technological, architectural, and spiritual achievements of the Egyptian and Moorish civilizations fascinated him. According to the books, Egypt was the cradle of civilization, even though Greek culture often got the credit.

Jarv Dee also happened to be a self-taught scholar of Moorish civilization when he met Jerm D. Meanwhile, Tay Sean's personal search for the answers to these big questions led him even further back in history, to the cosmic origins of humanity. When the three met (soon to be joined by fourth member Mikey Nice), their parallel quests for knowledge all clicked.

As they began to compare notes from their studies, the group started to feel that historically, a lot of knowledge was hidden. Very deliberately.

"For example, with the burning of the library at Alexandria," Tay Sean says. "In the Dark Ages, there was a serious effort to suppress esoteric knowledge. Anything that wasn't mirroring whatever kind of Christian shit that was going to go into the Bible was suppressed."

"Anything that was going to hurt their business," Jerm Dee adds. "That's what Catholicism was: a business. You can't have people being awakened with free access to knowledge if you're going to keep them in bonds."

"It's about social injustice," Tay Sean concludes. "It's about misinformation. It's about people trying to get over that. That's both something that's happening currently, that's happened historically, and that has landed us in the precarious place where we are now in this world."

The guys have a point. It seems like there are a lot of things we should have figured out by now.

"I like using mysticism in my music because it's a way to sneak the wake-up pill to people, to subversively get them to unify and agree before they even know what it is," Jerm D says. "It's about awakening that higher consciousness without getting on that soapbox, because that doesn't work. You know, like Shabazz has to hit you with the super-sneaky. Only those who are initiated can know."

The lyrics of Shabazz Palaces, the Seattle rapper Jerm D is alluding to, are even harder to decipher than Kingdom Crumbs'. Shabazz's rhymes read like the mad scribblings of a space prophet

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IN SEARCH OF THE MYSTICS

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sent to Earth to warn us about . . . something. The group's MC, Ishmael Butler, also claims a cosmic origin, rapping that he is "new off the space ship, dipped in punctuation" in his song "Recollections of the Wraith." Shabazz Palaces' song titles read like alien fortune cookies: "An echo from the hosts that profess infinitum" or "Swerve . . . The reeping of all that is worthwhile (Noir not withstanding)."

Ishmael Butler, the man behind Shabazz Palaces, never gives up anything in interviews, batting away writers who attempt to probe the cryptic madness of it all. He *has* dropped hints at his visions through his music videos. One in particular—by art collective The Black Constellation, a collaboration between Shabazz Palaces and THEESatisfaction created as an ode to Seattle science-fiction writer Octavia Butler—opens up the sort of world the two groups seem to see in their mind's eye.

In the video, a group of vibrantly dressed people of African descent traverse a lush, futuristic world, devoid of familiar structures or shapes (except for a singular car). The people seem vaguely alien, mostly expressionless, wearing clothes of unfamiliar styles and cuts. They wander knowingly, harvesting food from the forests and communing at nightfall for dancing and an odd hand game that appears to be some sort of energy-channeling ritual. Meanwhile, Butler and Tendai Maraire, Shabazz Palaces' multi-instrumentalist, stand wearing a sort of hybrid turquoise scuba mask/Egyptian headdress.

It's an absolutely gorgeous piece of cinema, a look into a naturalistic utopian future that might exist after current systems inevitably crumble—a future that seems to be built on this hidden knowledge, something people knew long ago but was suppressed for one reason or another. Butler herself often explored this kind of speculative fictional future. In the "Lilith's Brood" series, aliens named the Oankali come to save humans from the nuclear war that has almost wiped us out. The main protagonist, Lilith, an African-American woman, has children with these aliens, who become destined to integrate the human and alien societies and rejuvenate our broken Earth.

Kung Foo Grip, a hip-hop group out of Kirkland, shares these post-apocalyptic, utopic visions. They frequently rap about the concept of the "Indigo Children," the New Age idea that certain children are born possessing subtle supernatural abilities.

Kung Foo Grip's most recent album, *Growing Up in the Future*, is an excellent, anxiety-ridden examination of what it means to be young in our dire world. "The ozone's running out of clean air/ Ain't nobody wanna be here/But where would we go if we leave here?" raps MC Eff is H on the album's title track.

Like Kingdom Crumbs, Kung Foo Grip makes it feel as though a consciousness shift is necessary, if not imminent. "Indigo Children is our generation, a generation where we have to wake up. Imagine a world where you've got a lot of interracial mixing. A time in the future where there's no separation. Where people are on this different level of thinking, way more advanced and conscious than past generations. It's a utopian world," Eff is H explains.

Jerm D is completely on board with the Indigo Children concept. (Kung Foo Grip and Kingdom Crumbs are friendly and have played shows together.) Even though they talk about it in their own separate, cryptic ways, it's the same idea. "Our Western culture doesn't have a lot of solutions or options for getting in touch with that natural, spiritual realm," Tay Sean says. "Our music is about providing that solution, that bridge to a spiritual world in the West. It's necessary because in everyday life we're realizing that the solutions we have in the West just aren't working. People are getting obese, they're dying, or you're a slave to your job."

BRANCH III
Trance Ritualists

"As far as ritual today. We're sort of engaged in ritual all the time. They tend to be more secular. You know—checking your e-mail. Getting coffee in the morning. They've become mundane. There's a tendency to want to put that mysticism back because we're so devoid of anything like that here in the West. Everyone is looking for something like that."

—Randall Dunn, producer and multi-instrumentalist for Master Musicians of Bukkake

Alan Bishop is sort of your archetypical "crazy uncle"—a bald, hunched-over imp of a man, rarely found without sunglasses on his face and a cigarette in hand.

This is exactly how I found Bishop the first and only time I've encountered him, when I stood behind him in line for a grungy bathroom at a DIY music venue. Bishop's Seattle-based world-music label Sublime Frequencies had been a favorite of mine, particularly a scene from one of its "ethnomusicology" films, *Musical Brotherhoods from the Trans-Saharan Highway*.

It depicts a busker in an open-air Moroccan market absolutely wailing on an electric *oud*, a traditional Middle Eastern string instrument. The sounds the man makes are nothing short of sheer wizardry—thunderbolts of joyously malevolent riffage that put Black Sabbath to utter shame. An enormous crowd surrounds the man, who sits accompanied by a batshit-crazy hand-drum ensemble slapping out clamorous, heady polyrhythms. It's an incredible thing to behold: a mass of people gathered to experience this trance-inducing, ritualistic Sabbath shred.

This is the sort of thing Bishop lives for—notorious for the world travels to Africa, Asia, and the Middle East that found him and his brother Richard in various unbelievable circumstances, like performing alongside Indonesian fire-breathers in the mountains.

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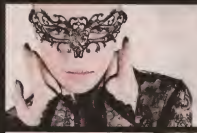
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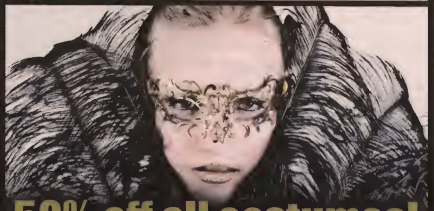
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IN SEARCH OF THE MYSTICS

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These travels, along with his Lebanese, Freemason upbringing, formed the basis not only of Sublime Frequencies but of his band Sun City Girls. Comprising the Bishop brothers and drummer Charles Gocher, Sun City Girls blazed an insane path through the underground-music world from 1979 until Gocher's death in 2007. Over their 50-album career, Sun City Girls created a bonkers pastiche of raga, Arabic, African, and Indonesian music blended with punk rock, jazz, beat poetry, and confrontational performance art. A typical Sun City Girls show might have involved kabuki makeup, ethnic masks, psychobabbling in completely made-up languages, and crowds getting alcohol thrown at them or poured down their throats.

After their start in Arizona and their surreal world travels, the Bishop brothers eventually settled in Seattle, the city where I found myself standing behind Alan waiting to pee. I awkwardly tapped him on the shoulder and introduced myself before bringing up the electric *oud* scene.

Bishop put his lit cigarette in his mouth and grinned. "Well, kid, if you like that racket so much, I better see you fiddling around with a goddamned electric *oud* sometime soon."

And with that, he slammed the bathroom door behind him.

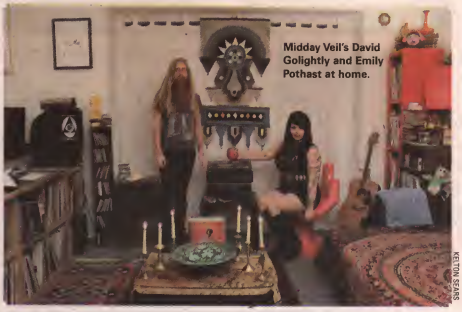
Later that night, a cloaked, masked Bishop joined the headlining band onstage, a local group called Master Musicians of Bukkake. The heirs apparent to Sun City Girls, MMOB is a group of world-traveled musicians who throw together an infinite number of cultural influences to churn out their particular brand of heavy, droning psych music. When they perform, a copious amount of fog is pumped onstage and various totems are held aloft. Everyone wears black robes and turbans, and one person is usually wearing a giant horned mask of a Tibetan Bonpo spirit or an enormous headpiece fashioned to look like the Hindu goddess of death, Kali. All things considered, the show that night wasn't far from the electric *oud* scene.

About a year after that encounter with Bishop, I'm at a coffee shop with Randall Dunn. Sitting across from the stately, bearded man clad entirely in black, I realize that this is the first time I've actually seen his face; usually it's hiding behind 100 pounds of fog or one of those turbans or headpieces. Dunn is one of MMOB's founding members, and easily one of the foremost shamans in my journey through the world of Northwest mysticism.

I'm here to ask Dunn about something in particular: ritual.

The concept of ritual worked itself into almost every conversation with the artists and musicians I spoke to for this piece. "Ritual," like "mysticism," is a very vague term. It can mean anything. It can also mean nothing at all. And that's sort of the point.

"Our rituals are completely empty vessels," Dunn says. "A lot of the ritualistic aspect that people probably think we take seriously is more of an empty vessel for us to discover ourselves. It's to encourage people to have an internal dialogue about important things through this sort of modernistic, Dada approach. We hope it points people towards these more meaningful traditions that they'll investigate themselves."


Midday Veil's David Golightly and Emily Pothast at home.

KEITH SAYS

As many artists I interviewed echoed, the postmodern mish-mash approach to ritual by this particular branch of Northwest mystics seems born of a desire to instill some sort of meaning in our dull, individualistic lives. At its worst, it functions as parasitic appropriation. But at its best, it's a fascinating metaphysical gumbo that can literally induce a potent, transformative trance.

These are the Trance Ritualists.

"To me 'ritual' could mean a lot of things," Dunn says with his hands folded. When Dunn speaks, it's in the manner of a measured, thoughtful professor. "In the context of a rock band, 'ritual' is somehow related to burning incense, or fog, or some sort of environment that seems pseudo-religious or pseudo-spiritual. It's so people can feel like they're participating in something that has more meaning than, say, going to Chop Suey on a Tuesday. I think that's great—wanting to participate in music in a higher realm is always good."

Dunn has traveled the world and performed with musicians in places where music still holds a very powerful spiritual place in the culture. While Dunn apes this sort of tradition, he readily acknowledges the sleight of hand involved in what MMOB do. In that sense, Dunn is admittedly indebted to Sun City Girls, who could be considered the forefathers of this branch of Northwest mysticism. MMOB knowingly dub

their music "post-colonialcore."

Alda can create offerings with their elk skulls; Shabazz Palaces can wander the forest in turquoise Egyptian headpieces; MMOB can whirl about in Tibetan masks shrouded in fog. But in the end it's all referential. It's all empty. Yet these empty rituals are meant to point to something that's not empty—to something bigger. Something beyond words.

The home of Emily Pothast and David Golightly is sort of like Willy Wonka's chocolate factory for psychedelia: mandala wall hangings, giant plastic chains shaped like hands, and an actual library of esoteric, mystic texts that include original copies of historic illuminated manuscripts.

The couple founded Translinguistic Other, a record label featuring what can loosely be defined as "psych bands" from the area. In reality, the link among them is less genre-bound than conceptual. Many Translinguistic Other bands are interested in this concept of ritual. Pothast and Golightly also have their own band, an amazing krautrocking group called Midday Veil. (Their last record was produced by Dunn.)

Midday Veil's songs probe deep into the cosmos, questioning the nature of reality and perception. Pothast is a witchy presence onstage, often wearing flowy black dresses and entering trancelike states that make her eyes bug out during her sermonistic tunes. She's a self-taught student of Carl Jung, the psychiatrist who plunged deep into his own mystic visions after he broke ties with his more uptight contemporary Sigmund Freud. Pothast cites Jung's work often in her lyrics.

But, all things considered, for her the lyrics aren't really the point. "You know, it's *The Translinguistic Other*," Pothast says. "It's bumping into that thing that you can't talk about. It's that experiential, wordless thing."


Master Musicians of Bukkake

Austin Kramer/LA

"Music is one of the few things that gets at that—that thing you can't talk about with words," Golightly adds.

When Midday Veil hits everything right, Pothast says, her body becomes an instrument. The other band members confirm this: When everything works right, they are very much engaged in a trancelike state. The group is possessed by some wordless force that speaks through them.

"I mean, that's just the definition of good music," guitarist Timm Mason says. "The best bands are the ones that have that center to them."

Midday Veil's shows *feel* like rituals. There is fog. There are hypnotic rhythms. People in the audience act unusually. During a show in Denton, Texas, Pothast said, one particularly entranced audience member came onstage and began grinding up on a monitor, exposing her genitals to the band.

"That was literally an unfolding of the lotus," Pothast laughs. "But when things are all working, there is this actual unfolding of eternity that happens on top of everything."

Like Pothast, Olympia-based musician and visual artist Arrington De Dionyso is a student of Jung and his mystic visions. Growing up in Spokane, completely on his own he stumbled upon his ability to throat-sing in the style of the Tuvan people of central Asia. When he performs, he growls and howls like an animal, creating otherworldly vocal sounds you wouldn't know humans were capable of.

De Dionyso's band, Malaikat dan Singa, creates what he calls "trance punk." In his own words, he makes "trans-utopian world music for a world that exists in fever dreams and hallucinations"—a "channeling of ecstatic states, and a confrontation with the sublime." His music is an attempt at glimpsing these utopic states, visions of better worlds that can only be achieved through . . . whatever it is he does.

Inspired by his accidental foray into the world of throat-singing, De Dionyso traveled to Indonesia and engaged in actual musical ritual with native musicians. These rituals transgressed the sacred and profane—a marriage of the spiritual realm and pop music. At a recent lecture at the Henry Art Gallery, Arrington showed video of one of these rituals, The Indonesian Horse Trance Dance Kuda Lumping. Dancers in horse costumes prance about as performers crack whips around them. Meanwhile, De Dionyso, wearing loose-fitting Indonesian trousers, skronks away on his sax along with the native musicians, creating a sort of mind-melting hypno-jazz that descends deeper and deeper into the rabbit hole as the ceremony progresses.

"When I'm onstage and I'm throat-singing, it feels incredible. It's like taking 10 yoga classes all at once," De Dionyso says. "There's an ephemeral energy-channeling that happens . . . something that comes from outside of yourself when you are engaged in this sort of ritual performance. Occasional glances into the sublime."

The utopia the Trance Ritualists envision doesn't grow from a fictional wilderness as it does for the Eco-Mythologizers or emerge from a cosmic realignment as it does for the

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

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Consumers would pay higher grocery prices



"Economic studies show I-522 would increase grocery prices for Washington families by hundreds of dollars per year."

Dan Newhouse, Former Director Washington State Department of Agriculture

Many food labels would be false and inaccurate



"Initiative 522 is so badly written it would require some foods to be labeled as genetically engineered, even if they're not. It would give consumers misleading information."

Ken Eikenberry, Former Washington State Attorney General

I-522 won't give consumers what they're looking for



"Initiative 522 isn't based on sound science and wouldn't give consumers accurate or reliable information. I-522 would not make our food any safer, but it would make our food more expensive."

Dr. Nancy Auer, Former President Washington State Medical Association*

*Title and affiliation for identification purposes only

"Washington voters and consumers can serve their best interests by voting No on I-522."

Seattle Times *Editorial, 10/5/13*

"I-522 doesn't live up to its own truth-in-packaging claims."

Tacoma News Tribune *Editorial, 10/6/13*

"Labeling needs to be done the right way, and I-522 falls short."

Everett Herald *Editorial, 10/16/13*

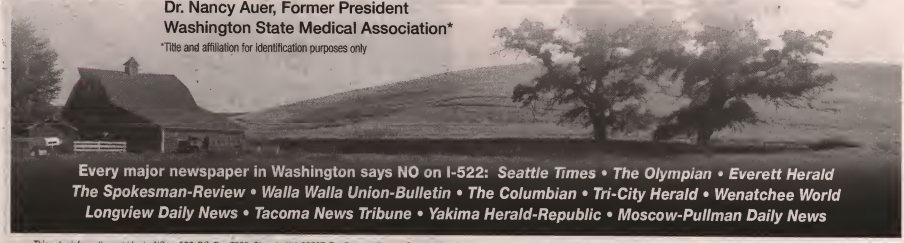
"Exemptions for everything from dairy and beef products to restaurant foods render much of I-522 meaningless to consumers."

The Spokesman-Review *Editorial, 10/22/13*

"[I-522] would confuse rather than inform, so voters should reject this poorly worded and deceptive initiative."

The Olympian *Editorial, 10/22/13*

NO 522



Every major newspaper in Washington says NO on I-522: *Seattle Times • The Olympian • Everett Herald The Spokesman-Review • Walla Walla Union-Bulletin • The Columbian • Tri-City Herald • Wenatchee World Longview Daily News • Tacoma News Tribune • Yakima Herald-Republic • Moscow-Pullman Daily News*

This voter information paid for by NO on 522, P.O. Box 7325, Olympia, WA 98507. Top five contributors: Grocery Manufacturers Association Against I-522, Monsanto Company, DuPont Pioneer, Dow AgroSciences LLC, Bayer CropScience.

IN SEARCH OF THE MYSTICS

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Cryptic Apocalyptics. Rather, it comes from within—from a sort of wordless inner discovery that springs from the potent seeds of our current culture, where traditions and symbols from disparate times and places intermix on the Internet, available for anyone to explore. Pothast's esoteric medieval manuscripts, for example, were ordered online. De Dionysio's upcoming trip to record with more Indonesian musicians was funded thanks to Kickstarter.

But for some, like Fungal Abyss, inner discovery through the wonders of the Internet can be shortcut by potent hallucinogens.

The Seattle band's album *Bardo Abgrund Temple* (on Translinguistic Other) was recorded completely improvised under the influence of psychedelic mushrooms; the band locked themselves in a Tacoma studio and just went for it. The result is fascinating—a surprisingly together psych record that swells and crumbles in intricate symphonic movements. Despite planning nothing, the band created a cohesive record.

"Everything that we do is ritualistic," explains Ben Thomas-Kennedy, Fungal Abyss's drummer. "Sometimes the ritual itself can be more important than the actual thing. Our practice space is our temple, and it's adorned so the environment is a player in what we're creating. We come here, get really stoned, and make music together."

"Mushroom trips are a way of unlocking that," says bassist Dorando Hodous. "It's a way of unlocking a higher consciousness, and a way of connecting. With Fungal Abyss, when we play, it's transcendental. It's beyond words. I'll snap out of it and not even know what happened."

For Fungal Abyss, as for many of the bands interviewed here, topography is a huge player. Besides being a cradle for potent 'shroomery, the Northwest's massive trees and mountains also force the band to confront this connectedness on a day-to-day basis. Hodous' job as a commercial driver often finds him talking with out-of-towners, who gawk at the forests that speckle our highways, about the region's natural beauty.

"I mean, you'll never completely understand it, but the place we live in just naturally makes you want to ask questions about the truth of things. About how things are connected, and how it all works. The ritual is just one way of engaging in that and understanding that," Hodous says after taking an enormous bong rip. "I mean, you look at a huge, old, ancient tree . . . it's just natural to want to seek its wisdom and ask it some questions. You know—what were the prehistoric dinosaurs like? What's the nature of reality?"

Whether these empty rituals are rooted in world cultures, esoteric medieval texts, or enormous bong rips, they are all meant to point toward this larger, more inclusive idea of community—a spiritual sort of connectedness that these invented, rootless traditions can engender.

"The real ritual and the real thing we should be engaged in is creating the environment so more of this can be created," Randall Dunn says. "It's all interdependent. We're all in our separate camps and doing things on our own, but we're all talking about the same thing. You tend to forget interconnectedness in a secular society, but as human beings, we're all interconnected."

Sometimes that interconnectedness sneaks up on you. Near the end of my mystic quest, I took a weekend trip to the Olympic National Forest with a friend, where I found myself staring at an enormous tree. It sat in the middle of a dramatically verdant island of ancient fauna in the Hoh Rainforest, home to some of the highest biodensity on Earth, rivaling the Amazon.

Every inch of the tree was covered in green moss, orange fungus, and alien-looking sprouts growing tumultuously atop one another. Even after studying ecology in college, I look at intense natural systems like this and have no idea what relationships all these organisms have with one another. The size of the tree and the complicated network of life in front of me made me feel very small.

> "I mean, you look at a huge, old, ancient tree... it's just natural to want to seek its wisdom and ask it some questions. You know—what were the prehistoric dinosaurs like? What's the nature of reality?"

The scene also made me think of a line from the essay "Green Gothic" by local visual artist Matthew Offenbacher. The essay explores our unique Northwestern preoccupation with ecology in art through the lens of Stephenie Meyer's tween romance novel *Twilight*, which takes place in the same park I found myself standing in.

"The dilemmas Edward and Bella face echo those of much of the art which engages the history and ecology of the Northwest landscape," Offenbacher's essay posits. "What do you do if you love a monster? What if you are a monster, an ethical and moral creature who happens to be an abomination?"

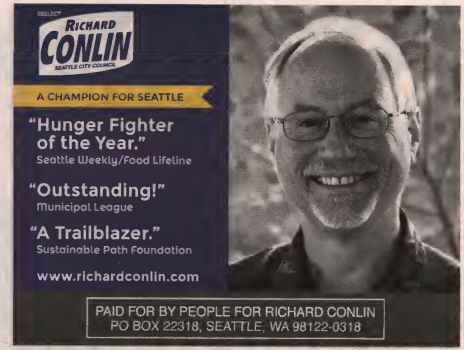
Considering the scope of the damage humanity has wrought on the world, it's hard not to feel like a monstrous abomination sometimes. When Kingdom Crumbs talks about envisioning the end of the world, you know what they mean. Sometimes it makes you want to escape and completely start over, Alda-style.

These Northwest mystics, despite their outwardly Zen aura, all had an anxious awareness of the poor state of things when I spoke to them. These people are deeply concerned. All our conversations were punctuated by a quiet, sad knowingness that the systems currently in place aren't really working.

It makes sense that these artists are inspired by the one system that does seem to work—the ecology of the Northwest. Whether in a literal sense, like the Eco-Mythologizers; in a coded puzzle, like the Cryptic Apocalyptics; or in a postmodern mish-mash, like the Trance Ritualists, all these mystics seem to find spiritual solace in an ancient, timeworn, and seemingly hidden concept: interconnectedness.

If it works for the trees in the Hoh, let's hope it will work for us.

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Unifine Resurrected

How a man and a mill are looking to re-localize the state's antiquated flour industry.

BY PATRICK HUTCHINSON

Steve Fulton fondly remembers the bread of his childhood. "The taste was amazing. It was deeply aromatic and had this distinctive nutty flavor. You can't find bread like that anymore," he laments. The bread he remembers was baked by his mother from flour processed by his great-uncle. It was the flour that made his bread different.

Or rather, it was the flour mill that made it different: a special kind of mill, one that was poised to change Washington industry that has remained unchallenged for more than a century. Dressed in a simple polo shirt and slacks, the semi-retired State Farm agent from Arlington says with a smile, "That's why I'm bringing back my great-uncle's mill, the Unifine."

The availability of local, organic, and sustainable food in this city is staggering. Every restaurant, grocer, and farmer is constantly trying to find a way to grow it closer and greener in a never-ending battle of foodie one-upmanship. They won't stop, either—not until they are literally growing kale in your mouth, or at least planting it so close to your table that it reverses global warming. But in this local fervor, one basic, Washington-relevant ingredient seems oddly, incredibly, left out: flour.

Around the turn of the 20th century, Washington's local flour mills, which numbered more than 150, started dropping like flies. With them we lost the ability to buy a wide variety of flours with unique tastes and textures. They were replaced by massive roller mills, which could produce fine white flour at a very low cost. Roller mills were meant to streamline the process and maximize output, which meant more generic white stuff and less regional variation—fewer flours with the nuances provided by differing soil types or farms that specialize in certain types of wheat, like hard red winter and hard red spring, both of which grow exceptionally well in Washington.

The Unifine is unlike any other type of mill. What's produced is flour with more of its nutrients and flavor intact.

The loss of these small stone or hammer mills and the rise of roller mills centralized the industry to just a few facilities, where nearly all grain would wind up to be processed and distributed. Washington state's two main roller mills, in Spokane and Cheney, are like most: hugely inefficient energy hogs that rob flour of much of its nutritional content. While roller mills can make whole-wheat flour, they can only do so by separating and hydrating the grain's constituent parts and then forcing them back together; the stamping, crushing, squeezing, hydrating, and rolling causes nutrient and flavor loss. To hear Fulton talk about roller mills, you'd think they were the tree-chopping machine from *Fern-Gully*: "I've toured these mills. It's almost comical how large they are. They're so inefficient, it's amazing."



Leonard (left) and Steve Fulton

The Unifine is unlike any other type of mill. As grain is fed into it, an ultra-high speed rotor pulverizes the whole grain into incredibly fine flour. The process is over in a matter of seconds and requires a fraction of the power and equipment of larger roller mills. What's produced is flour with more of its nutrients and flavor intact, yet still fine enough for baking. It also stays cooler during processing, which lowers the flour's rates of rancidity. Unifine mills are affordable, too, so farmers or cooperatives will be able to purchase and run them.

The state's third largest crop, wheat generates $1.14 billion in revenue. Yet for decades, the only options available have been local, organic whole-wheat flours that aren't good for baking or roller-milled flours that are mass-processed from wheat grown with chemicals. The one or two places that do make whole-wheat flour use old stone or hammer mills that simply cannot produce flour as fine as roller mills can.

What's needed is an alternative—something small and affordable enough that individual farms and co-ops could operate them, but also powerful enough so that the flour would be suitable for even the most delicate pastries. The Unifine seems the perfect solution. Why, then, has it been missing from Washington's flour production?

The Unifine's history in Washington is somewhat complex, but, as with most stories, it's probably best to start with the Nazis. In the late 1930s, British miller John Wright became so concerned about the lack of nutrition in roller-milled white and wheat flour that he invented the Unifine rotor mill. Unfortunately, shortly after he built a prototype in the early '40s, it was destroyed by German bombers during an air raid of London.

After the war, Wright came to the U.S. looking for investors to help him rebuild, and found an ally in Washington State University president Dr. Wilson Compton, who helped Wright raise the funds to build a new Unifine mill. Industry experts were amazed at the machine's ability, calling it "a miracle." The college began heavily promoting the mill, encouraged by everyone from farmers to government officials looking to use Unifine in developing nations. But one contingent was not happy: The flour industry's Scrooge McDucks did not appreciate the potential competition.

In May 1949, William Hayley, director of productions and products control at Fisher Flour Company, sent Compton a letter, advising him that "The promotion of Unifine flour in a way designed to make all other flours appear inferior would seem to be short-sighted, to say the least, and most unworthy of the State College of the great wheat-producing state of Washington." The result? No more promotion of the Unifine mill. The scientific community had spoken, the taste-testers had spoken—everyone was on board except a deeply

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

FoodNews

BY SARA BILLUPS

Stoup Brewing has joined the Ballard Brewery scene. Swing by the tap room from 4–8 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, 4–9 p.m. Friday, noon–9 p.m. Saturday, and noon–8 p.m. Sunday.

Ethan Stowell has announced plans to open a new restaurant in Madrona. Similar to a French bistro, **Red Cow** will feature steak frites. A tiny separate fine-dining spot in the back, **Noyer**, will recall his first restaurant, Union, with its daily changing menu.

Forrest Brunton cut his teeth working in Seattle kitchens like Oddfellows and Golden Beetle. Now he's putting his energy into **Snack/Bar**, a schmancy junk-food concept. Sample the likes of prosciutto rinds and pudding pops at pop-ups around town in the coming months.

The year's last **Coyle's Bakeshop** pop-up at Book Larder is slated for Saturday, Nov. 2 from 9 a.m.–noon. Rachel Coyle reported on Facebook that she's concentrating on finding the right brick-and-mortar digs.

Seattle Chocolate Company celebrates its anniversary on Thursday, Nov. 14 with an in-store party. In addition to complimentary wine and drinking chocolate, guests will score 25 percent off select retail chocolate. The first 100 customers who make a purchase take home a free gift.

food@seattleweekly.com

Temperature Check

FROM BRIAN CLEVENGER, *CHEF AT TAVOLÀTA*

HOT

Washington seafood, Neah Bay's in particular. Neah Bay is about 160 miles north of Seattle, and is home to the best halibut, king salmon, coho salmon, sockeye salmon, steelhead, black cod, ling cod, Dungeness crab, and more!

LUKEWARM

Craft-cocktail bars. Don't get me wrong—I enjoy a great crafted cocktail too. But their popularity is making one of my favorites, the Moscow Mule, into a $14 cocktail. After work I'll stick to a cold $4 Tecate!

FREEZER BURNED

Bad barbecue. I like great barbecue as much as the next person! But please, stop serving dry shredded pork with overly spicy sauce. Also (you may want to sit down for this) . . . just because it's cooked on a grill doesn't automatically make it barbecue.

Continued From Head

» FROM PAGE 23

entrenched industry and a few people who controlled a lot of money in the state. Unifine was killed before it could get off the ground.

A decade passed before another break came. Steve Fulton's uncle, Leonard Fulton, a wheat farmer and grange member who had followed the Unifine's dramatic history, eventually bought a few mills and used them for his own cooperative from 1961 to 1988, making the flour Steve so fondly remembers. When Leonard retired, there simply wasn't enough demand to warrant continuing the mill. It was the '80s; people loved Michael Jackson and Wonder Bread, not whole-wheat flour. Once again, Unifine fell off the map—or so everyone thought.

In 2006, on a whim, Fulton did a Google search for "Unifine," curious to find out more about the mill his uncle had operated. He was astonished to discover Azure Standard, an Oregon farming cooperative making Unifine flour. Azure had found the mill collecting dust in a warehouse and rebuilt it as a side project, quickly realizing its benefits. They had made Unifine flour for years, and still do today, but have never attempted to sell the mills or promote that method in the industry. Yet their customers are obviously fans. Orders of Unifine flour over the past five years have nearly doubled.

In 2010, a milestone was reached. For the first time in more than a century, whole-wheat bread outsold white bread, indicating a much larger move away from the flour that roller mills were created to make. Data like this fuels Fulton's dreams of a return to localized milling, with Norman Rockwell-esque scenes of farmers processing their own flour and soccer moms subsequently clamoring for it at Whole Foods.

But Scott Yates of the Washington Grain Alliance isn't so sure. "Farmers know how to farm. Milling is a complicated process, and most [farmers] just aren't interested in pursuing processing," Yates isn't ruling it out, but is careful not to make any predictions.

Once he saw what Azure Standard was doing, Fulton began a full-on assault. Now his engineers have designed updated versions of the mills and are ready to start fabricating. At Azure's current mills, he's using existing models to create a pancake mix (called Cougar Pride) to help drum up interest. The mix is set to be released this fall in limited quantities. He's also got a website (unifineflour.com) highlighting the mill's history and a video describing the process—which is so intense you'd think it was a J.J. Abrams trailer for a flour movie, dramatically indicating that a Unifine mill will really fuck up some grains.

Steve's ready, and it appears the market is too. We are food-obsessed enough to support such an industry change, and now we have the tools to do it. It's all there, just waiting. SW

food@seattleweekly.com











Wine Snob or Wine Wuss? When It's OK to Send a Bottle Back



THE BARCODE

BY ZACH GEBALLE

It's a moment fraught with tension. The bottle has been opened, the taste has been poured. Now comes that essential question: Is this bottle of wine OK or—gasp, dare I declare it unfit? Even experienced wine drinkers are occasionally flummoxed by that quandary, and for most diners it's hard to summon the courage to say anything, even if the wine seems flawed. That's why I'd like to dispel a few myths and misconceptions about sending wine back.

For starters, make sure the bottle you requested is in fact the one you've been served. The server or sommelier should show you the bottle and repeat the type of wine, producer, and vintage that you ordered. To the best of your ability, take a few seconds to verify that it's the one you wanted. Many restaurants carry several vintages of a certain wine or several wines from the same producer, so mistakes can happen.



Once the wine is opened and poured, take a few seconds to focus on it. You can examine the cork if you like, but don't smell it; smelling a cork is a profoundly amateur move, and also offers little indication of the quality of the wine, despite what you may have heard. That said, if the cork looks moldy or in poor shape, especially in a younger wine, that's cause for concern. But what really matters is what's in the glass.

Start with your nose. First and foremost, does it smell like wine? If it smells like vinegar, wet cardboard, rotten eggs, or nail polish, then chances are something is wrong with it. There are, however, several unusual aromas that can be present in a good bottle. For instance, many French wines have a particular scent best described as "barnyardy." That's due to the presence of a species of yeast called *Brettanomyces*, which at low levels can add complexity and depth. Run rampant, however, it can easily take a wine past the point of enjoyment. When ordering a wine from the Rhône Valley or Burgundy, it's important to be aware that there may be some level of "brett" present. Some people like it, others don't, but know that many Old World wines can have unusual aromas that don't necessarily indicate a flaw.

Generally speaking, though, if it doesn't smell right, say something. If you're not sure, it's perfectly fine to ask the server or sommelier to sniff to confirm your doubts.

If the wine smells all right, move on to taste. Take a small sip and draw a bit of air into your mouth. Forget what your mother taught you; this is one time it's OK to slurp at the table. If the wine tastes solid, you're home free. Remember that some wines may require a bit of oxygen contact to fully express themselves (hence the need for a decanter), but again you're mostly checking to make sure there are no off flavors: vinegar, rancid meat, or brine.

If you do think the wine is *off*, you absolutely should send it back. I once brought to a table a bottle so bad I nearly gagged after opening it; needless to say I didn't offer them a taste! Restaurants can and do get reimbursed for these flawed wines by their distributors, so it's really no skin off their back to have a bottle returned.

So it's all well and good to send a wine back when something is clearly wrong with it, but how about if you just don't like it? This is a much touchier issue, and different restaurants may have different policies. Some take the position that if there isn't a problem with the wine, they won't take it back. Others are more willing to accommodate an unhappy guest, even if it means taking a loss on a bottle. Obviously, the more expensive the wine, the less likely the restaurant is to grin and bear it.

Restaurants get reimbursed for these flawed wines by their distributors, so it's really no skin off their back to have a bottle returned.

From my perspective, merely not liking a wine isn't a compelling-enough reason to send it back. Is that barbaresco you ordered too tannic or that California chardonnay too oaky? That's likely not an issue with the wine, but with your having ordered one you're not familiar with. Your server or sommelier is there to help you find the right bottle. If you follow their suggestion and still really don't like it, then by all means say something. They'll almost certainly want to make up for their mistake. But if you just order at random off the list? The Romans had a phrase for you: *Caveat emptor*.

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What's in Your Cart, Jeff?

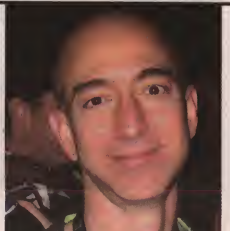
The new Bezos book admires Amazon's founder, but never gets close to him.

BY BRIAN MILLER

When Bay Area journalist Brad Stone came to Seattle recently to discuss ***The Everything Store: Jeff Bezos and the Age of Amazon*** (Little Brown, $28), he visited everyplace *but* Amazon. There were stops at Microsoft and Zillow, plus a public event at Town Hall; and his book tour subsequently took him to LinkedIn and Google down in Silicon Valley. Everyone in corporate America wants to learn about one of its fastest-growing and increasingly feared companies. Everyone shops there—200 million customers and counting. Shareholders are happy (the stock is up 32 percent this year). The company earned more than $60 billion in revenue last year. Yet it has a poor reputation as a place to work—whether in South Lake Union or one of those sweltering warehouses. And people blame its "confrontational culture" (per Stone) on its supposedly bullying, parsimonious, Ayn Rand–worshipping founder. Is any of that a fair assessment?

Based on the roughly one month I worked at Amazon, circa 1996 or '97, I have no idea. I know what I read, and I know what gossip I hear from current and former Amazonians. Fresh out of grad school and broke, I did e-mail customer service when the company sold only books and had one office/warehouse by the Pecos Pit in SoDo. I also trained by picking and packing books in the warehouse. I made my own parking sign with an Amazon.com-emblazoned bit of cardboard; everything was improvised and done on the fly. The warehouse workers were happy and the office staff seemed nice. I even interviewed with Bezos himself, which means there couldn't have been many employees at the time. He was perfectly pleasant, and I think he asked my SAT scores (of course), which were hardly great. Being a fellow Ivy Leaguer probably got me hired, yet I soon left—more on that below—for a penurious career in journalism. So that was a huge missed opportunity, right?

Stone has interviewed plenty of ex-Amazon employees—some bitter, some rich from their early stock options—to report this fairly straightforward and favorable business history of the 19-year-old enterprise. It's more about the company than the man, though the two can't be separated just now. Stone didn't have direct access to Bezos, but the entrepreneur definitely authorized many interviews, which made the book possible. Since Stone has covered Amazon for many years, and presumably will in years to come, there's an implied trust: Fair coverage in the past meant no hatchet job now, which keeps keyhole access open in the future. *The Everything Store* isn't the kind of CEO testament that Walter Isaacson landed with *Steve Jobs* two years ago. Jobs was then near the end of his life; he'd reached the top of Mount Apple and was willing to breach his privacy somewhat in order to deliver oracular pronouncements.



ANDREW LEE

Bezos at a recent business conference.

Bezos isn't ready for that just yet. Not quite 50, running a company with some 97,000 employees, he's busy expanding Amazon abroad, trying to surpass Walmart. "Get big fast" goes the corporate mantra. There's content, streaming, and web services. Bezos has his $25 billion fortune, the spaceship venture, *The Washington Post*, that giant underground Texas clock, and rumored plans for TV set-top boxes and smartphones. Yet given that *The Everything Store* documents much employee burnout, one wonders how long Bezos can sustain his mighty pace. Paul Allen and Bill Gates eventually stepped back from the day-to-day demands of Microsoft to become admired local billionaires.

But here's the catch: Bezos is still too busy to be loved. Allen left Microsoft in 1983, then let his geek flag wave high—buying sports teams, saving the Cinerama, building the EMP and a library at the UW, and doling out money through his foundation. Today he basks in the glow of the Seahawks, your dorky bachelor uncle finally made good. Since relinquishing his CEO position in 2000, Gates has embraced international philanthropy. His reputation has also improved since retirement; and no matter how much we complain about its products, Microsoft is today seen as a more grown-up place to work than Amazon, with better home/life balance. We all love to shop on Amazon, but would you really want to work there?

There's a reason the daytime population of SLU appears to be entirely smart single men in their 20s and 30s: They can work the hours; they don't have anyone waiting at home. The Medina-dwelling Bezos and his elite managers ("the S Team") are well past that point. Stone touches upon this in *The Everything Store*, but he's more concerned with the growth than the cost. Although he quotes some treasured Jeffisms—"I'm sorry, did I take my stupid pills today?"—and cites "the ruthlessness of [Amazon's] corporate character," he also praises Bezos' "competitive personality and boundless intellect."

Yet as Stone discovers in the leaked "Amazon.love" memo authored by Bezos, the guy is quite aware of how perceptions matter. "Some big companies develop ardent fan bases, are widely loved by their customers, and are even perceived as cool," Bezos writes. He cites Apple, Nike, Google, and Costco among others. At the other end of the spectrum are Walmart, Microsoft, and Goldman Sachs. Then there are more Jeffisms aimed at pleasing the end-user. Among them: "Defeating tiny guys is not cool," "Conquerors are not cool," and "Mercenaries are not cool."

I wish Stone had dwelled more on the paradox here: Ask Barnes & Noble or Zappos or Diapers.com if Amazon was cool in its dealings with them; ask the corner booksellers if Amazon is cool; ask any supplier or subcontractor or employee whose job has been outsourced abroad.

What I want even more, though, is to know more about the man, our neighbor. There are kernels—that he has no taste or interest in music, that he's still a reader, that he was once a sci-fi fan fond of *Star Trek*, etc. Yet he remains a figure more global than local, aloof from his adopted home. I think his image problem also comes down to this: What we don't like about Bezos is a projection about what we don't like about the relentless pace of modern business. And for all his talk about focusing on the customer, we're numbers to him, data points on the graph of consumer desire, our shopping patterns being constantly combed and harvested.



And I'm no quant. I have no head for business, and that's why I left the company so quickly. Also, while I appreciate good customer service, I'm incapable of giving it. Thus I quit Amazon before the IPO, before the stock options, before anyone saw how big the company might become. Do I regret that decision? After reading Stone's book, not one bit.

bmiller@seattleweekly.com

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This Week's Pick List

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 30

Simon Winchester

The timing of Simon Winchester's latest pop history is so perfect it's almost funny. *The Men Who United the States* (Harper, $29.99) surveys the men—all men—who through canal, rail, and Napoleon's land broker crafted this sprawling nation. Absent current events, the book would stand as a thoroughly readable and insightful piece of history. But with the 113th Congress in gridlock, it also serves as an indictment. The United States is a nation created not by royal decree, not by divine right, but by men willing it to happen. The question of whether that will still exist hangs over the entire book; I stepped away from several chapters fearing the answer is "No." Winchester, born in Britain, recently became a U.S. citizen, and his writing has a newly patriotic streak that leads him to breeze by the dark truths of U.S. history. He acknowledges the crimes committed against Native Americans as settlers expanded west, but he doesn't spend much time on it. So Indians come off as the proverbial eggs cracked to make the national omelet. Still, Winchester reminds us how an unwieldy collection of states and political interests become a superpower. **Seattle Central Library, 1000 Fourth Ave., 386-4636, spl.org. Free. 7 p.m.** DANIEL PERSON

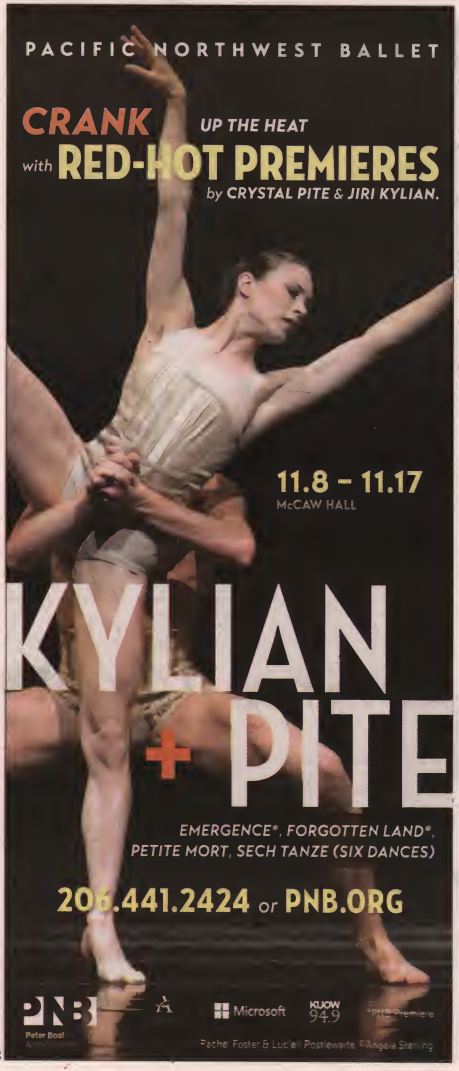


MARION ETTLINGER

THURSDAY, OCT. 31

NT Live: Frankenstein

Danny Boyle knows a thing or two about horror. He had James Franco cut off his arm in *127 Hours*. He burned James McAvoy alive in *Trance*. And then there were the swift brain-munching zombies in *28 Days Later*. But did you know he also directed theater? *Frankenstein* is his 2011 adaptation of the Mary Shelley novel, scripted by Nick Dear and staged for England's National Theatre to much acclaim. Swapping roles on alternating nights, portraying the monster and his creator, were Benedict Cumberbatch (before his star turn as Khan in *Star Trek Into Darkness*) and Jonny Lee Miller (yes, from *Trainspotting*). Now you can view both versions in one Halloween-tastic evening of filmed theater. "Rather like seeing *The Tempest* rewritten from Caliban's point of view. Boyle's production is a bravura triumph," said *The Guardian*, which also praised the "astonishing performance" by Cumberbatch as the forlorn creature. *The New York Times*





CATHERINE ASHMORE/NATIONAL THEATRE

Miller (top) and Cumberbatch as your *Frankenstein* duo.

» FROM PAGE 27

even sent a critic to London, who lauded the "wrenching stage portrait of the terror and wonder of being born." Should we be surprised that this befuddled, fresh-created monster is treated more sympathetically than the mad doctor who stitched him together from cadaver parts? Not tonight, of all nights. (Also 9 p.m. Sun., Nov. 2.) **SIFF Cinema Uptown, 511 Queen Anne Ave. N., 324-9996, siff.net. $15–$20. 6 p.m.** BRIAN MILLER

Black Weirdo Halloween Party

Hip-hop duo THEESatisfaction uses the term "black weirdo" as shorthand to describe the ethos behind its art—one that's self-assured and unconcerned with the expectations foisted upon musicians who are black, queer, and female. It's also a banner under which like-minded artists can gather: THEESatisfaction's website features a series of posts, tagged "black weirdo of the week," showcasing important, boundary-pushing Seattle artists. The duo has curated parties like tonight's Halloween event in San Francisco, Toronto, and New York; here they've chosen the two Seattle acts that (besides being frequent THEESatisfaction collaborators) most obviously embody the "black weirdo" ideal: avant-garde rap duo Shabazz Palaces and genre-melting beatmaker OCnotes. Along with THEESatisfaction's Catherine Harris-White, both will play DJ sets at this party that's shaping up to be totally weird, whether or not you're in costume. **Lo-Fi Performance Gallery, 429 Eastlake Ave. E., 254-2824, thelofi.net. $12–$15. 9 p.m.** ANDREW GOSPE

SUNDAY, NOV. 3

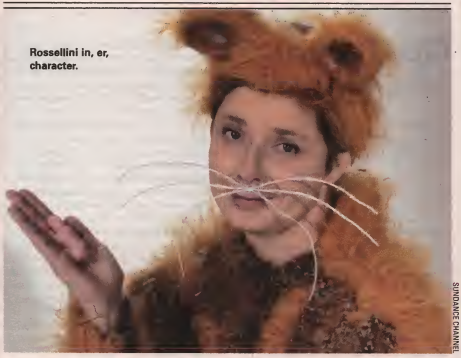
Bot Brawl

With names like Angry Ant, Gutter Monkey, and Mr. Plow, the combatants in this radio-controlled demolition derby do not sound particularly impressive or lethal. Organized by the gearheads at Western Allied Robotics (aka WAR), Bot Brawl likes to keep things small. The combatants are organized by weight, in four divisions from one to 30 pounds. Through a series of preliminary three-minute bouts, the mostly wheeled robots fight in an elevated, Plexiglas-enclosed ring, meaning you and your kids can get plenty close to the carnage. (Don't worry: The rules prohibit flames or any kind of toxic fuel.) And from a parent's perspective—especially if you've got sons between the ages of, say, 4 and 14—there's nothing better to do on a soggy autumn afternoon than watch stuff get blowed up real good. We kid about the explosions, of course. And the atmosphere is more wholesome and alcohol-free than Hazard Factory's power-tool races; it's more like Tonka trucks meets *Mad Max*. Most of the devices, as on the old TV show *Robot Wars*, scuttle about with low and wedge-shaped noses, trying to flip their opponents over like turtles. Their drivers and designers tend to come from engineering and tech backgrounds, meaning not a few Ph.D.'s and software mavens will be working off their workplace frustrations from Microsoft or Amazon. At the same time, as America worries about the skills gap in science and technology education, here's a way to get your kids hooked on circuit boards and gadget design. From these wee warriors may come future careers at NASA or Google, whose Mars rovers and self-driving cars will have a very different set of design specs, of course. **Seattle Center Armory, westernalliedrobotics.com. Free. Noon–6 p.m.** BRIAN MILLER

MONDAY, NOV. 4

Isabella Rossellini

It would be wrong to call the whimsical zoological film/lecture series *Green Porno* a second career for the great Isabella Rossellini, since she's had so many. Journalist, model, actress, and now tongue-in-cheek educator—her rich and varied life befits her famous lineage as the daughter of Ingrid Bergman and Roberto Rossellini. If Hollywood doesn't know what to do with her, she does her own thing. Since 2008, that means a series of short films on the sex lives of shrimp, bugs, and the like, wearing colorful costumes and working with a variety of collaborators. Tonight she'll screen several of those shorts and read from texts by Jean-Claude Carrière. Nor all are about sex: Survival in the animal kingdom comes before procreation. But the two topics are intertwined in *Green Porno* (seen on the Sundance Channel). Why, Rossellini asks, do we and all



Rossellini in, er, character.

SUNDANCE CHANNEL

animals have species-specific sexual organs? "So I don't get screwed by a bear." **The Moore, 1932 Second Ave., 877-784-4849, stgpresents.com. $37.50–$62.50. 8 p.m.** BRIAN MILLER

TUESDAY, NOV. 5

Emmylou Harris & Rodney Crowell

Though it's been nearly 40 years since they started collaborating, February's *Old Yellow Moon* is the first album by Harris and Crowell, two enduring icons of Nashville royalty. As a member of her Hot Band in the '70s, Crowell is the songwriter behind a long list of Harris' hits, a partnership that began with "Bluebird Wine" from her 1975 debut *Pieces of the Sky*. The impeccable instrument that is Harris' voice never had any difficulty attracting songwriters, but the handful of them she's repeatedly championed over the years—Willie Nelson, Townes Van Zandt, and Gram Parsons, to name a few—have clearly benefited from her interpretations of their work. (See: "Pancho and Lefty," "If I Needed You," "Luxury Liner," etc.) Meanwhile, Crowell established a highly respected solo career and wrote songs covered by Johnny Cash, Tim McGraw, and Willie Nelson. Yet it's his projects with women artists that have lately kept him busy, again working with Harris and author Mary Karr (with whom he co-wrote the songs on last year's *Kin*, with contributions from Harris and Crowell's ex-wife, Rosanne Cash). On *Moon*, Harris and Crowell sing beautifully together. At 66, Harris' angelic country croon has taken on a weathered patina. With Crowell's lucid harmonies, they sound effortless and natural, like a couple of old friends catching up over a cup of coffee, as if no time has passed at all. (Sardonic songwriter and guitar virtuoso Richard Thompson opens the show.) **Benaroya Hall, 200 University St., 215-4747, seattlesymphony.org. $40–$200. 7:30 p.m.** GWENDOLYN ELLIOTT



Together again: Harris and Crowell.

DAVID MCCLISTER/ENDEAVOR

Craig Sheppard

Among many magnificent performances I've heard from UW faculty pianist Craig Sheppard, two composers who have stood out are Bach and Rachmaninoff. To one he brings clarity and expressiveness without theatricality; to the other, a technique that conquers the most exacting complications, a sweeping way with a tune, and an arch-romantic grand manner. Put these together and you have just what you need to make the piano music of Brahms work (oh, is that all?), so tonight's "Mostly Brahms" recital will surely thrill. This repertory poses challenges: an ability to keep Brahms' dense textures from sounding logy and to tease out his melodies and countermelodies and bring them to life. Plus, in a way, Brahms is a link between the two: a descendant of Bach in that he continued the line of German classicism into the 19th century (as opposed to the more self-consciously "modern" Wagner/Liszt tradition), yet Rachmaninoff's ancestor as an imposing, serious-minded pianist/composer (as opposed to the more-glitter-than-substance school of virtuosi). Sheppard's chosen Brahms' op. 4 Scherzo and the two sets of *Klavierstücke*, op. 118 and 119. As if that weren't enough, he's added (this is the "Mostly" part) Schumann's Fantasy in C, op. 17: hugely difficult not only in terms of finger dexterity, but, with its episodic structure, in a "Where is this piece going and what am I supposed to do with it?" sense. **Meany Hall (UW campus), 543-4880, music.washington.edu. $12–$20. 7:30 p.m.** GAVIN BORCHERT

TOWN·HALL SEATTLE

(11/1) Lyanda Lynn Haupt
The Secret Lives of Urban Wildlife

(11/2) Max Blumenthal
Life & Loathing in Greater Israel

(11/3) Short Stories Live
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

(11/4) Howard G. Buffett, Howard W. Buffett, & Joe Whinney
'40 Chances'

(11/4) Billy Collins: 'Aimless Love'

(11/5) Rebecca Eaton
'Masterpiece','Downton Abbey,' 'Sherlock,' & More

(11/6) Town Music: Enso String Quartet
Opera Composers' String Quartets

(11/6) Scholar in Residence
Dr. David Montgomery
Stories From My Pet Rocks

(11/7) Simon Singh
'The Simpsons & Their Mathematical Secrets'

(11/7) Donald Fagen of Steely Dan with Ross Reynolds
'Eminent Hipsters'

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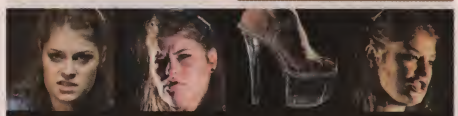
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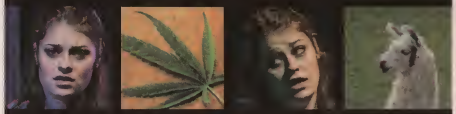


Bo-Nita

by ELIZABETH HEFFRON
directed by PAUL BUDRAITIS

TICKETS ARE $12–$18!*

*Service fees may apply.



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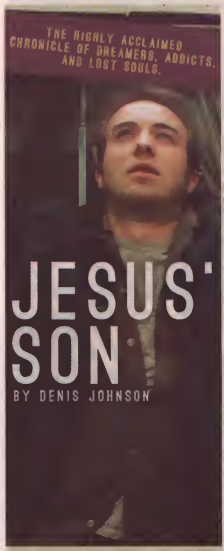
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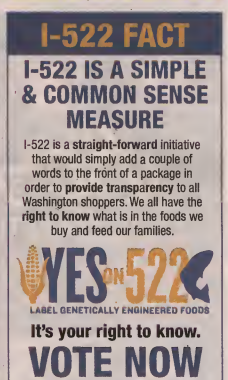
Hannah Moats in Bo-Nita, 2013. Photo by Nate Watters

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Opening Nights

Bo-Nita

SEATTLE REPERTORY THEATRE, 155 MERCER ST. (SEATTLE CENTER), 443-2222, SEATTLEREP.ORG. $12–$65. 7:30 P.M. WED.–SUN., PLUS MATINEES. ENDS NOV. 17.

Ahhh, 13. Even in the most optimized life, that milestone year cultivates more awkwardness and drama than any other. In most lives it also cultivates melodrama, clichés, sullenness, depression, and a host of other tedious symptoms mostly absent from Elizabeth Heffron's beguiling new one-woman play. In it we meet a smart, sensitive St. Louis girl (eponymous Bo-Nita), her socially marginal single mom Mona, Mona's various consorts, and Grandma Tiny, known for "professional" belly-dancing in stilettos.

Hannah Mootz deftly and heartbreakingly embodies all these characters and more in rapid-fire situational episodes Bo-Nita recounts. Directed by fringe fave Paul Budraitis, Mootz teeters between girl and hag, thug and wag, with nary a moment's conflation. Her multiple performances in one seal her reputation as one of Seattle's most intriguing and technically adept talents. Though the only performer onstage, each of her distinct characters steals scenes from the others; it's a stage trick like an Escher drawing.

Bo-Nita tells the funny, affecting 90-minute story of her life while kicking around the playground of her new school, evoked by Jennifer Zeyl's adobe walls—painterly and desolate as a Balthus interior—which Robert J. Aguilar saturates in colored light reflecting her emotions (from howling magenta to sun-bleached bone). She has plenty to talk about, starting with a mishap in which she thought her "semi-ex-stepfather Gerard" had died while sexually accosting her, and the consequences as she, Mona, and Mona's current beau Leon (aka Leroy, #47, Whozzits) trump up what they think is a plausible scenario to dispose of the body. Even while packing Gerard's death-induced stiffie into fishnets, Bo-Nita's lexicon glides seamlessly between raunchiness and poetry; her overuse of similes underscores the urgency to make herself heard by a world outside the pail of mean crabs she was born into.

Local playwright Heffron (*Mitzi's Abortion*, *New Patagonia*) gives ambiguities their ample due: Gerard isn't a pure monster, and Mona isn't stupid or without a conscience. But the system has failed everyone through wrong incentives and lack of opportunities, compounded over generations. The boppy refrain of Blondie's "Dreaming" captures the piece's dream-deferred, dashed hopes. It's shattering to watch the song pass from Mona's anthem to Bo-Nita's. MARGARET FRIEDMAN

Much Ado About Nothing

CENTER HOUSE THEATRE (SEATTLE CENTER), 733-8222, SEATTLESHAKESPEARE.ORG. $25–$48. 7:30 P.M. WED.–SAT., PLUS MATINEES. ENDS NOV. 17.

All the screwball elements are in place: a cigarettes-and-whiskey-voiced blonde, a strapping playboy who'd sooner be dead than wed, and their coteries, plus a honey-throated crooner, horn-rims, beach balls, parasol drinks, espadrilles, masts to climb, and a boat to hide in. It's 1953, and Messina, as conceived by Craig Wollam, is a waterside pleasure dome, replete with canal, pool, harbor, rampart, and tawny stone esplanade. When bonny Don Pedro (Jim Gall) announces "I know we shall have reveling tonight," his hips wriggle a cha-cha. A nearly vocational commitment to leisure and fun replaces the careworn war years in George Mount's sprawling postcard of connivance and flirtation. As the setting for Shakespeare's most endearing comedy, Messina is a place you'll want to bide awhile.

Naturally Jennifer Lee Taylor and Matt Shimkus get the plummest bits as the fiercely unhitched sparrers Beatrice and Benedick. Her Bette Davis eyes belie a knack for clowning, and his seemingly impassive, Kennedy-jawed face becomes irresistible when stricken by her words. The careenings of this love-wreck, and that of Beatrice's virtuous cousin Hero (Brenda Joyner) and her gullible admirer Claudio (Jay Myers), propel us from sartorially sophisticated swizzle parties to casual picnics, outfitted (emphasis on "fitted") by Doris Black. As if the rich visuals, enhanced by Roberta Russell's ethereal lighting, were not world enough, Rob Witmer's soundscape offers yet more gratifications, including crickets, waves, and payoffs for some funny slapstick setups. These include Benedick's eavesdropping scene and Dogberry's (David Quicksall) investigating his assistant Verges' derriere with a Geiger counter.

The postwar period setting offers Don Pedro's malevolent brother Don John (Nick Rempel) a handy excuse for his bitterness: In white military uniform, his reticence looks like haunted PTSD from World War II or Korea. But despite the trappings of the superficially chipper, tragedy-erasing early '50s, Mount doesn't force historicity, opting rather to let the themes sing as they will to whom they will. And speaking of singing, Justin Huertas (as a Bobby Darin–like Balthasar) has an über-smooth voice that ups the cool of every Michael Brockman composition he performs, including the beautiful pep song for the ladies, "Sigh No More." In this Eisenhower-era, A-bomb setting for the Bard, where even the *Kinsey Report* makes an appearance, nothing's more explosive than passion and a lit fuse. MARGARET FRIEDMAN

Red Light Winter

ACT THEATRE, 700 UNION ST., 292-7676, AZOTHEATRE.ORG. $25–$30. THURS.–SUN. ENDS NOV. 24.

Adulthood is supposed to bring maturity. When it doesn't, some hapless souls get stuck in a revolving door of post-adolescence, hoping that either expectation or inertia might somehow lead to responsibility, self-fulfillment, and happiness. *Red Light Winter* is a play about a trio competing in the Tough Mudder that is life—and instead of helping one another rise above a rising tide of circumstances, everyone's trying to stand on the others' shoulders. Drowning may result.

It's also a tale of alienation, over-education, and the selfish choices people make when they think no one is looking. At the bottom of the heap is Matt (Richard Nguyen Sloniker), a suicidal "emerging" playwright who might actually emerge—if he weren't so terrified of the world and hiding in his ratty little abodes. During a winter trip to the sex salons of Amsterdam, his former college roomie Davis (Tim Gouran)

returns to their hostel with French hooker Christina (Mariel Neto), supposedly to help Matt get over his cheating ex-girlfriend. As it turns out, the ex was cheating with Davis, and now they're married. Oh, and Davis banged Christina three times before bringing her back to Matt as a peace offering.

Act II begins in New York a year later. Matt's obsession is now no longer his ex, but the Amsterdam one-night stand who left a red gown he now regards as her surrogate. Christina shows up unexpectedly because (of course), cad that Davis is, he gave her Matt's address rather than his own when she asked for it. Suddenly she's back in Matt's room, nothing like what she originally represented herself to be, and her memory of him is as vague as his is clear. Cue Davis, who drops by while Matt is out retrieving food for the woman of his dreams, and Davis . . . cannot remember who she is, either. Until finally it dawns on him: "Oh," he says with a knowing smile, "you're *that whore*."

There's an ugly denouement to Adam Rapp's 2005 drama, a sort of psychological bloodbath where all the injuries are internal. The New York playwright has a gift for dialogue that echoes the darker side of Woody Allen. Apart from a few comic asides, there are multitudes of moments in *Red Light Winter* when you wish, absent any compassion among these three, one would have the good sense to Get the Hell Out of There.

In Azeotrope's second staging of this piece, with the same fine cast as its 2010 debut production, Desdemona Chiang again directs this maelstrom-in-miniature with near-balletic grace. She lets Rapp's characters stalk one another in concentric circles until there's no place left for refuge. None of the nude scenes feels gratuitous; they only compound the characters' vulnerabilities and missed opportunities to make amends.

In an odd way, *Red Light Winter* makes perfect Halloween fare. After all, what's more horrifying than seeing someone suffer, then looking on as they drag everyone else down with them?

KEVIN PHINNEY

stage@seattleweekly.com

arts&culture» Performance

BY GAVIN BORCHERT

Stage

OPENINGS & EVENTS

BOOBS AND THE BARD This show's subtitle, "A Shakespeare Burlesque," is probably unnecessary. Performers include Jesus la Pinga, Scarlett D'Hairdye, and Tootsie Spangles. JewelBox/Rendezvous, 2322 Second Ave., 800-838-3006, brownpapertickets.com. $18–$30. 8 p.m. Fri., Nov. 1–Sat., Nov. 2.

THE EDGE Bainbridge Island's owp improv troupe. Bainbridge Performing Arts, 200 Madison Ave. N., Bainbridge Island, 842-4569, theedgeimprov.com. $12–$16. 7:30 p.m. Sat., Nov. 2.

OUR TOWN And over here's the Bathhouse Theatre, where Seattle Public Theater's Youth Program is staging Thornton Wilder's classic. Seattle Public Theater at the Bathhouse, 7312 W. Green Lake Ave. N., 524-1300, seattlepublictheater.org. Opens Nov. 1. 7 p.m. Fri.–Sat., 2 p.m. Sun., plus 2 p.m. Sat., Nov. 9. Ends Nov. 9.

PETER AND THE STARCATCHER A Peter Pan prequel. The Moore, 1932 Second Ave., 877-STG-4TIX, stgpresents.org. $22.50–$72.50. 8 p.m. Wed., Oct. 30, 2 & 8 p.m. Thurs., Oct. 31, 8 p.m. Fri., Nov. 1, 2 & 8 p.m. Sat., Nov. 2, 1 & 6:30 p.m Sun., Nov. 3.

THE PURIFICATION PROCESS Malika Lee's play explores breast cancer from the viewpoint of African-American women. Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, 104 17th Ave. S., 800-838-3006, brownpapertickets.com. $7–$15. Preview Nov. 1, opens Nov. 2. 7:30 p.m. Thurs.–Fri., 2 & 7:30 p.m. Sat.–Sun. Ends Nov. 16.

ROPE Patrick Hamilton's mystery, loosely based on the Leopold & Loeb thrill-kill case. The Ballard Underground, 2220 N.W. Market St., ghostlightheatricals.org. $12–$15. Opens Nov. 1. 7:30 p.m. Thurs.–Sat., plus 7:30 p.m. Mon., Nov. 4 and 2 p.m. Sun., Nov. 10. Ends Nov. 23.

SEX DRUGS DEATH DISCO Vincent Kovar's play about '90s club promoter Michael Alig. Re-bar, 1114 Howell St., 800-838-3006, brownpapertickets.com. $15. Opens Nov. 1. 7:30 p.m. Fri.–Sat. Ends Nov. 23.

SHORT STORIES LIVE Readers' theater featuring works by Arthur Conan Doyle. Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave., 652-4255, townhallseattle.org. $10–$15. 2 p.m. Sun., Nov. 3.

SPINTHE BOTTLE Annex Theatre's late-night variety show, every first Friday. November's show is the annual 60 SECONDS MAXI edition, with minute-long acts from dozens of performers. Annex Theatre, 1100 E. Pike St., 728-0933, annextheatre.org. $5–$10. 11 p.m. Fri., Nov. 1.

Send events to stage@seattleweekly.com, dance@seattleweekly.com, or classical@seattleweekly.com
See seattleweekly.com for full listings.
● = Recommended

CURRENT RUNS

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE Agatha Christie's thriller about gradually, mysteriously dying housequests. Renton Civic Theater, 507 S. Third St., Renton, 425-226-5529, rentoncivictheater.org. $17–$22. 7:30 p.m. Thurs., 8 p.m. Fri.–Sat., 2 p.m. Sun. Ends Nov. 9.

ANIMAL CRUELTY Scot Augustson's "shadow puppet noir" tells of Chicken Jenny's brush with the law. Theater Off Jackson, 409 Seventh Ave. S., 800-838-3006, printers devil.org. $15–$18. 8 p.m. Thurs.–Sat. Ends Nov. 9.

● **ANYTHING GOES** Nothing could kill this Cole Porter classic like trying too hard; oh, well, you know how touring musical companies can be: frenetic, plastic, mechanical. But from the start, practically the first lines, of this Roundabout Theatre Company production, it was a relief to see that the cast has the art-deco-era insouciance down pat. If you can bring material like this true adult sophistication, and not just make it a sort of self-consciously mannerist period exercise, you have a winner. They can, and they do. Rachel York, in particular, is magnificent as sassy lounge chanteuse Reno Sweeney, owning the stage and making it look easy. (In Porterland, visible effort just leaves you less energy for the important things, like stowing away on luxury liners, knocking back cocktails, and looking good in white tie.) The songs, not that you need reminding, include "You're the Top," "It's De-lovely," and "I Get a Kick Out of You." Like the performances themselves, Kathleen Marshall's direction and choreography is smart but never strenuous; her Act 1 tap-dance finale, to the title song, is everything you could possibly want a production number to be. GAVIN BORCHERT 5th Avenue Theatre, 1308 Fifth Ave., 625-1900. $29 and up. Runs Tues.–Sun.; see 5thavenue.org for exact schedule. Ends Nov. 3.

THE BACCHAE GreenStage's "Hard Bard" series (classics with the gore turned up to 11) presents Euripides' tragedy. Stage One Theater, 9600 College Way N., 800-838-3006, greenstage.org. Free. 7:30 p.m. Thurs.–Sun. Ends Nov. 2.

BLAK CLOUD The Crucible meets improv. Wing-It Productions, 5510 University Way N.E., jetcityimprov.com. $12–$15. 8 p.m. Thurs.–Fri. Ends Nov. 22.

BLOOD PUDDING T.M. Sell's satire mashes up corporate politics and vampires. Des Moines Beach Park, 22030 Cliff Dr. S., Des Moines, 870-6527, brownpapertickets.com. $20. 7 p.m. Fri.–Sat., 2 p.m. Sun. Ends Nov. 3.

BO-NITA SEE REVIEW, PAGE 30.

● **CAFE NORDO** Restaging its first Seattle production from 2009, Cafe Nordo's show pays homage to all things henhouse with a fanciful dining experience that does for the art of fine food and conversation what Shortbus did for sex. Equal parts meat-and-greet, nightclub, and gustatory exploration, Chicken is also a winking nod to—and lampoon of—the dinner theaters of yesteryear. There's an Old World feel as the evening unfolds, with an accordion player gliding across the ballroom floor while the waiters seat their patrons, not all of whom know each other beforehand. What follows is a didactic-gastronomic tour through the life of a chicken named Henrietta, regularly

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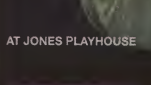
AT MEANY HALL NOV 8

Café Variations

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Directed by **Anne Bogart**
Created & Performed by **SITI Company**
Music by **George & Ira Gershwin**



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punctuated with high-flung prose to illuminate each course, offset by generous pours of some of the best wines grown around the state. The intent, successfully achieved, is that you become closer to both the food and the guests at your table. It only makes sense, then, that the meal is the main event, and in both presentation and flavor, it does not disappoint. Designed by director Erin Brindley, the menu proceeds from eggs—nestled in a nest made from Parmesan cheese and phyllo—to a mild and savory chicken soup to a roast chicken stuffed with homemade sausage and habanero cherries. With its delights and surprises (though few plot points other than the courses served), this is one very self-aware Chicken. Its performers all unflinchingly ate the honey dinner-theater clichés with tongues planted firmly in cheek. KEVIN PHINNEY Washington Hall, 153 14th Ave., cafenordo.com. 365-330. 7:30 p.m. Thurs.–Sun. Ends Nov. 24.

CAMPFIRE Spooky stories, improvised. Market Theater, 1428 Post Alley, 800-838-3006, unexpectedproductions.org. $10. 8:30 p.m. Thurs. Ends Halloween.

CANNIBALI THE MUSICAL! The tale of Alferd Packer, written by those South Park guys. Unexpected Productions Market Theater, 1428 Post Alley, 800-838-3006, unexpectedproductions.org. $12–$15. 8:30 p.m. Fri.–Sat. Ends Nov. 2.

AN EVENING OF CHRISTOPHER DURANG Four short plays. JewelBox/Rendezvous, 2322 Second Ave., 800-838-3006, fantasticz.org. $15–$20. 7 p.m. Wed. Ends Oct. 30.

FLAME IN THE MIRROR John Ruotti's exploration of the Irish experience in America. Eclectic Theater, 1214 10th Ave., S., 800-838-3006, eclectictheatercompany.org. $12–$25. 8 p.m. Thurs.–Sat., 2 p.m. Sun. Ends Nov. 3.

THE HOBBIT Studio East and StoryBook Theater present Tolkien. Studio East, 1170 108th Ave. N.E. #100, Kirkland, 425-820-1800, studio-east.org. $12–$14. 7:30 p.m. Fri.–Sat., 2:30 p.m. Sat.–Sun. Ends Nov. 3.

THE LUXURIA CYCLE Jimmie Galeites' exploration of modern romance "satirizes not only our society's obsession with finding the perfect partner, but also the way personal information is used as currency by corporate interests." Annex Theatre, 1100 E. Pike St., 726-0933, annextheatre.org. $5–$10. 8 p.m. Tues.–Wed. Ends Nov. 13.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING SEE REVIEW, PAGE 30.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD One of the creepiest zombie movies of all time becomes children's theater. Youth Theatre Northwest, 8805 S.E. 40th St., Mercer Island, 232-4145 x109, youththeatre.org. $15. 7, 8, & 9:30 p.m. Fri.–Sat. Ends Nov. 2.

RED LIGHT WINTER & 25 SAINTS Tim Gouran and Richard Nguyen Sloniker star in both these dramas, alternating in repertory. ACT Theatre, 700 Union St., 292-7676, azcheatre.org. $25–$30. Runs Thurs.–Sun.; see actttheatre.org for exact schedule for both. Ends Nov. 24. SEE REVIEW OF RED LIGHT WINTER, PAGE 30.

REWIRED The Phoenix and The Fool present an "immersive performance project" on the theme of "mental health and life on the periphery." Teatro de Psychomachia, 1534 First Ave. S., 800-838-3006, brownpapertickets.com. $18. 8 p.m. Fri.–Sat. plus Thurs., Oct. 31. Ends Nov. 2.

SUGAR DADDIES Sir Alan Ayckbourn came to Seattle to direct this production of his 2003 dark comedy. *Sugar Daddies* takes a familiar premise—a Faustian bargain between a worldly, wealthy older man with a shady past and a provincial, susceptible young woman—and rides it, well, nowhere terribly interesting. Emily Chisholm plays innocent, dowdy Sasha, who brings home hit-and-run victim Val (Séan G. Griffin, in Santa suit). In an interesting departure from the expected quid pro quo, he desires nothing in return but her joy—no sex, no strings. But Ayckbourn systemically saps potential menaces as soon as they appear: Sasha thinks her rent is going up (which might bind her to Val's largesse), but then it's not. When neighbor Ashley (John Patrick Lowrie) tries to warn Sasha about the possibly dangerous Val, with whom there is implied history, she implausibly refuses to let him tell. Such unswallowable details spring from Ayckbourn's comic craftsmanship, not from believable characters. Yet *Sugar Daddies* scores its laughs, even while paddling in place. MARGARET FRIEDMAN ACT Theatre, 700 Union St., 292-7676. $41 and up. Runs Tues.–Sun.; see actttheatre.org for exact schedule. Ends Nov. 3.

TEATRO ZINZANNI: HAIL CAESAR: FORBIDDEN OASIS Frank Ferrante returns as the flamboyant, omnisexual chef Caesar. Slinky Oreya Weber, equally skilled as an aerialist and singer, plays a resurrected Cleopatra. You pay e lot more at TZZ than you might for a show at Re-Bar or the Pink Door—though you're not just buying dinner and a show, but a lavish evening-length party. Teatro ZinZanni, 222 Mercer St., 802-0015. $108 and up. Runs Wed.–Sun.; see dreams.zinzanni.org for exact schedule. Ends Jan. 26.

TEATRO ZINZANNI: TAMBOURINE SUBMARINE Recess Monkey stars in TZ's nautical-themed family show. Teatro ZinZanni, 222 Mercer St., 802-0015. $19–$25. Runs 11 a.m. selected Sat. & Sun.; see dreams.zinzanni.org for exact schedule. Ends Dec. 15.

THIS IS HALLOWEEN A cabaret/burlesque spectacular based on The Nightmare Before Christmas, starring Armitage Shanks, Jed Dunkerley, Orkestar Zirconium, and many more. The Triple Door, 216 Union St., 838-4333. $20–$40. See thetripledoor.net for showtimes Oct. 30–31.

THE UNDERNEATH Kellean Conway Blanchard's horror-movie sendup is set in a seaside town. Annex Theatre, 1100 E. Pike St., annextheatre.org. $5–$20. 8 p.m. Thurs.–Sat. plus Mon., Nov. 4. Ends Nov. 16.

Dance

CORNISH DANCE THEATER Site-specific choreography by Salthorse in these performances. See cornish.edu for venues. 1 & 3 p.m. Sun., Nov. 3 & Sat., Nov. 9.

MOMIX Botanica is this dance-illusionist troupe's paean to the wonders of nature. Meany Hall, UW campus, 543-4880, uwworldseries.org. $51–$56. 8 p.m. Thurs., Oct. 31–Sat., Nov. 2.

GHOST GAME VII: THE WILD HUNT The Cabin's dessert-theater cabaret brings creepy folk tales to life through acrobatics, aerial arts, and dance. Youngstown Cultural Arts Center, 4408 Delridge Way S.W., 800-838-3006, cabiri.org. $40–$70. 8 p.m. Thurs.–Sun. Ends Nov. 3.

Classical, Etc.

- **THE MET: LIVE IN HD** Shostakovich's surreally irreverent *The Nose*, in William Kentridge's imaginative and acclaimed production. See metopera.org for participating theaters. 6:30 p.m. Wed., Oct. 30.
- **SEATTLE OPERA** Seattle Opera brings a light touch to Donizetti's 1840 opera, harmlessly updating the setting to France at the end of WWII. Sarah Coburn plays the title role, Marie, who as a foundling was raised by an army platoon but who discovers she's an heiress, jeopardizing her romance with Tonio (Lawrence Brownlee). SO veteran Joyce Castle is adorable as Marie's aunt the Marquise. Baritone Alexander Hajek is lively and nimble as officer Sulpice; I'd love to see him back in any number of comic baritone roles. This airy beignet is flavored with one splendid touch of camp: The Duchess of Krakenthorp gets a drag turn from tenor Peter Kazaras, swathed in violet. Imagine Harvey Fierstein as the Dowager Countess of Grantham. GAVIN BORCHERT McCaw Hall, Seattle Center, 389-7676, seattleopera.org. $25 and up. 7:30 p.m. • Wed., Oct. 30, Fri., Nov. 1, Sat., Nov. 2.
- **SEATTLE SYMPHONY: PSYCHO** Hitchcock's thriller with the Bernard Herrmann score played live. Everybody sing along: REET! REET!! REET!!! Benaroya Hall, 200 University St., 215-4747, seattlesymphony.org. $19 end up. 7:30 p.m. Wed., Oct. 30–Thurs., Oct. 31.
- **GALLERY CONCERTS** Meg Brennand, Page Smith, and Nathan Whittaker tag-team on all six Bach cello suites, plus some Boccherini. Queen Anne Christian Church, 1316 Third Ave. W., 726-6088, galleryconcerts.org. $15–$30. 7:30 p.m. Fri., Nov. 1, 3 p.m. Sat., Nov. 2.
- **SEATTLE COMPOSERS SALON** Seattle's new-music open-mike night includes music by Simon Henneman, Hope Wechkin, Kevin Williams, and Kam Morrill. Chapel Performance Space, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N., composersalon.com. $5–$15. 8 p.m. Fri., Nov. 1.–
- **SEATTLE SYMPHONY** Aside from "The Stars and Stripes Forever," when does a piccolo player ever get the spotlight? This weekend, the SSO's Zarhoht Dombourian-Eby plays a Vivaldi concerto. Benaroya Hall, 200 University St., 215-4747, seattlesymphony.org. $19–$112. 8 p.m. Fri., Nov. 1–Sat., Nov. 2.

MUSIC NORTHWEST Pianists Natalya Ageyeva, Ivona Kaminska, and Jane Harty play Bach. Olympic Recital Hall, S. Seattle Community College, 6000 16th Ave. S.W., 937-2699, musicnorthwest.org. $16–$18. 7:30 p.m. Sat., Nov. 2.

SEATTLE SYMPHONY CHAMBER MUSIC An eclectic program with a cast of thousands (of SSD players), including Beethoven, Boulez, Piazzolla, and Villa-Lobos' popular *Bachianas brasileiras #5* for soprano and cello choir. Benaroya Recital Hall, Third Ave. and Union St., 215-4747, seattlesymphony.org. $39. 2 p.m. Sun., Nov. 3.

BAINBRIDGE SYMPHONY CHAMBER MUSIC *Appalachian Spring*, Barber's String Quartet, and other Americana. Bainbridge Performing Arts, 200 Madison Ave. N., Bainbridge Island, 842-8569, bainbridge performingarts.org. $12–$16. 3 p.m. Sun., Nov. 3.

SEATTLE WIND SYMPHONY Holst, Shostakovich, and more. Meany Hall, UW campus, 800-838-3006, seattlewindsymphony.org. $5–$20. 3 p.m. Sun., Nov. 3.

VIENNA BOYS CHOIR Inarguably the finest vocal ensemble of male children in the capital of Austria. Benaroya Hall, 200 University St., 215-4747, seattlesymphony.org. $31 and up. 7 p.m. Sun., Nov. 3.

- **CRAIG SHEPPARD** SEE THE PICK LIST, PAGE 29.
- **ENSO STRING QUARTET** Verdi tossed off his tasty but neglected string quartet as a lark during rehearsals for *Aida*; the ESQ plays it alongside quartets by Puccini and Strauss. Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave., 652-4255, townhallseattle.org. $10–$25. 7:30 p.m. Wed., Nov. 6.

Opening ThisWeek

About Time

OPENS FRI., NOV. 1 AT THORNTON PLACE AND OTHER THEATERS. RATED R. 123 MINUTES.

If Woody Allen can leaven his comedies with supernatural gimmicks, why can't Richard Curtis? The British author of *Love Actually* and *Four Weddings and a Funeral* has built his latest project around time travel, but Curtis isn't interested in the vasty reaches of future worlds or anything like that. His focus remains romance, played out on a modest scale.

On his 21st birthday, Tim Lake (Domhnall Gleeson) is taken aside by his father (Bill Nighy) and informed of the family gift: The Lake men can time-trip. There are temporal restrictions, but basically Tim can go back and fix past errors by going into a dark closet and thinking hard about the previous moment in question. This is especially helpful during his courtship of Mary (Rachel McAdams), a cute and funny catch who seems to love him as much as he loves her. This is one of the odd notes about *About Time*: The central romance pretty much goes swimmingly. There aren't that many bumps in the road, and Tim's ability to go back and revise the past means he can wriggle out of most awkward situations. A couple of weird butterfly-effect incidents require extra effort, but the love story itself is smooth sailing, for a romantic comedy.

Curtis is as skillful with deft one-liners and a prone to mawkishness as ever. Toward the end of *About Time*, as though sensing the blandness of the central couple, he steers the film back toward father and son. This gives a nice opening to Nighy (when is this cagey pro going to get his first Oscar nomination?), but it makes way for beer-commercial sentimentality, too. McAdams fulfills the dream-girl outline with ease. (Curtis has realized you can't write British dialogue for an American—or in this case, Canadian. I still feel bad for Andie MacDowell in *Four Weddings*, trying to make London syntax work with her flat Yankee accent.)

One of the movie's pleasures—and it does have them—is the chance to watch an actor take his first leading-man shot. Gleeson, who was quite good in the otherwise misbegotten *Anna Karenina*, looks like a young Michael Caine but with half the aggression. His father is Brendan Gleeson, the burly Irish master, and he has his father's red hair and sly humor, if not his authority. But this movie doesn't cry out for authority—just wispy, winking charm. ROBERT HORTON

AKA Doc Pomus

RUNS FRI., NOV. 1–THURS., NOV. 7 AT GRAND ILLUSION. NOT RATED. 98 MINUTES.

"You gotta live something in order to sing something." Those words, spoken here by legendary soul singer Ben E. King, might be the blueprint for the blues, but they also serve as a lodestone for this doc about Jerome Felder, a disabled Brooklyn Jew who became one of the most influential songwriters of his generation.

His improbable story, captured in interviews, music, and archival clips and photos, is naturally transfixing. Stricken by polio at a young age, Felder fell in love with the blues after hearing Joe Turner sing on the radio. By the 1940s, he was sneaking into African-American blues clubs as a teenager, propped up on crutches, singing the blues that he lived. To keep his disapproving mother off the scent, Felder adopted the performance name Doc Pomus. It stuck through the next 50 years of writing and recording.

Filmmakers William Hechter and Peter Miller tell his story straight, weaving old interviews with Pomus (1925–1991) with remembrances from family, friends, and a handful of rock's early architects. All this is spliced among entries from Pomus' journal, mesmerizing in their lyrical beauty and given special poignance by being read by Pomus' friend Lou Reed, who died this very week. About his early love of the blues, Pomus writes, "It wasn't a monkey on my back; it was a midnight lady with a love-lock on my soul." The filmmakers trace Pomus' unlikely victories, pockmarked with fits of self-doubt and the humiliations of polio, on the way to fame and family. But this is no hagiography: Pomus is shown struggling with women, gambling, and food, which makes his blues all the more believable.

Besides the heartbreak and redemption is the jukebox full of great songs. We hear early tunes Pomus wrote for his childhood hero Turner, hits he authored for Ray Charles, and teeny-bopper classics penned with songwriting partner Mort Schuman. The doc's rich soundtrack also includes "A Teenager in Love," a litany of Elvis songs (including "Viva Las Vegas"), and the radio hits Pomus wrote for King and the Drifters ("This Magic Moment," "Save the Last Dance," etc.). Each song has a unique Pomus story behind it, as his daughter, Sharyn Felder, will explain at the Saturday, Sunday, and Monday screenings. MARK BAUMGARTEN

Big Joy: The Adventures of James Broughton

RUNS FRI., NOV. 1–THURS., NOV. 7 AT NORTHWEST FILM FORUM. NOT RATED. 83 MINUTES.

"Follow your own weird." "I believe in ecstasy for everyone." "When in doubt, twirl." These pearls of breathtaking insight and wit came from the pen of poet/filmmaker James Broughton, subject of Stephen Silha and Eric Slade's doc. Born in Modesto, Calif., in 1913, Broughton came of age in the bohemian San Francisco newly liberated by the end of World War II. Time spent in England resulted in his avant-garde short *The Pleasure Garden*, acclaimed at Cannes; he returned to SF to find the Beats in full flower. From there he blithely rode every zeitgeisty wave, through the Summer of Love and into the years of Gay Lib, as an elder statesfaerie. Pioneer or opportunist? Prescient genius or one of the most adept coattail-riders in American cultural history? I suspect the latter, judging from his twee, nursery-rhyme-scented poems and dismayingly dated, emptily self-indulgent shorts (some of which will be screened Saturday and Sunday at 5 p.m.). Despite his prolificacy, the clips shown in *Big Joy* suggest that he'll be remembered in cinema history primarily as the father of Pauline Kael's daughter.

Broughton married costume designer Suzanna Hart in 1962 but left her for poet Joel Singer in 1975 after three days of sex in a hotel room in Pennsylvania, an epiphany for him but an embittering blow to Hart—curiously strong reactions both, since Broughton had already had flings with both genders for decades. From then to his death in 1999 (in Port Townsend!), his work seems to consist of little else but talking about those three days. Affectionately researched and crafted, *Big Joy*'s sole but serious flaw is that it doesn't make the case that its subject merits the attention. GAVIN BORCHERT



Supply your own Viagra joke. From left, Kline, Freeman, De Niro, Douglas.

Last Vegas

OPENS FRI., NOV. 1 AT SUNDANCE AND OTHER THEATERS. RATED PG-13. 104 MINUTES.

The four actors assembled for the old boys' night out that is *Last Vegas* all have Oscars on their shelves. This movie will not win any of those. Still, it is a measure of their skill that they do not betray a hint of embarrassment or condescension in the course of this lightweight bash. Perhaps they sense the shrewdness behind the project, which combines *Hangover*-lite hijinks with last-go-round mellowness.

They're the Flatbush Four, buddies-for-life who gather in Sin City for the marriage of the slickest and most successful of them, Billy (Michael Douglas—who else?). In a spasm of feeling his mortality, Billy has proposed to his 31-year-old girlfriend, and the occasion puts the chums in a variety of moods. Archie (Morgan Freeman) wants to flee the safety of elderly life; Paddy (Robert De Niro) still grieves over his late wife, who chose him over Billy a lifetime ago; Sam (Kevin Kline) has a free weekend pass from his wife to get as crazy as he wants, as long as it snaps him out of his funk. Does Kline seem the odd man out there, somehow an actor of a different generation? He did lag behind the others in making a big-screen first impression, although he's only three years younger than Douglas. He certainly seems younger in *Last Vegas*, executing funny walks and finding fresh ways of delivering his lines. The others are cast so on-the-nose—De Niro grouchy, Douglas cocky—you can be forgiven for wondering what might've happened if they'd switched roles around.

Another Oscar-winner lurks in the cast: Mary Steenburgen, as a lounge chantoozie named Diana, an age-appropriate partner for whichever of the guys can move quickest. It's nice to see Steenburgen get more lines than usual, and sobering to think of how long she's been around without the opportunities of her male colleagues.

Things in Vegas go as you'd expect. The old-age jokes are doled out in different degrees of groanworthiness, with asides about how rude these young kids are today, but hey—if we set an example, they might learn something. Director Jon Turteltaub (*National Treasure*) is an old hand at finding the comic beats in this kind of package, and the film moves along so smoothly it's almost alarming. Nothing breaks the surface, and no moment gets close to the authentically restless elderly angst of Martin Brest's *Going in Style*, a forgotten 1979 George Burns vehicle. *Last Vegas* is just one more trip down the bucket list. ROBERT HORTON

The Trials of Muhammad Ali

RUNS FRI., NOV. 1–THURS., NOV. 7 AT VARSITY. NOT RATED. 94 MINUTES.

The most famous athlete of the 20th century, his every fight and utterance covered by international media from 1960–81 (his boxing career), Muhammad Ali has left a mountain of archives for authors and filmmakers to mine. But here's the catch: They'd better find something new to say after so many prior books and documentaries. Bill Siegel succeeds in pulling up only a few nuggets here, like Ali performing in the Broadway musical *Buck White* during his ban from boxing. That period, 1967–71, should've been framed to much tighter and more dramatic effect, yet Siegel falls into the trap of giving us the whole of the GOAT, which cannot be done in 94 minutes. (A Ken Burns series, maybe.)

I doubt many millennials watch boxing today, and for some this footage may be fresh. The sport is in such decline, its brain-injury stats so damning, that the tale of Ali's conscientious-objector lawsuit—to avoid being drafted into the Army during the Vietnam War—feels as distant as the Civil War. Siegel punches it up with some fresh interviews, but his sources are too fawning (especially Louis Farrakhan, that smiling clown from the Nation of Islam). Ali is great enough without being lionized yet again. His famously repeated quote "I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong" is certainly true and courageous, but Siegel never digs deeper into Ali's resentment about his loss of vocation—the millions he couldn't earn while serving safely in a National Guard unit, far from the front lines. BRIAN MILLER

12 Years a Slave

OPENS FRI., NOV. 1 AT GUILD 45TH AND OTHER THEATERS. RATED R. 133 MINUTES.

How do you tell the story of something as enormous and horrifying as American slavery? In the case of *12 Years a Slave*, the subject is played out on human bodies and in objects: a single sheet of precious foolscap writing paper, the juice of berries, a violin. Instead of taking on the history of the "peculiar institution," the film narrows to a

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single story and these scattered things. It is based on a memoir by Solomon Northup, a free man from Saratoga, New York, who was kidnapped and sold into slavery in 1841. He is played by English actor Chiwetel Ejiofor (*Inside Man*, *Dirty Pretty Things*), whose Spencer Tracy–like ability to observe and calmly draw us into an experience is quite powerful here.

Solomon—robbed even of his name, he's called Platt by his captors—passes through the possession of a series of Southern plantation owners. One sensitive slave owner (Benedict Cumberbatch) gives Solomon—a musician by trade—a fiddle, adding the sincere hope that his family may hear Solomon play for many years to come. (That sort of clueless "kindness" is one of the film's rich veins of horror.) A more physical sort of gash is delivered in flesh-rending ferocity by the cruel cotton farmer Edwin Epps (Michael Fassbender), whose attention also gravitates toward the furiously hard-working Patsey (Lupita Nyong'o).

Patsey, like Solomon, is caught inside the terror of not knowing how to play this hand. Do they keep their heads down and try to survive, or do they resist? The prospect of Patsey becoming her owner's mistress is suggested in a fascinating scene featuring the great Alfre Woodard. We don't get to know many enslaved characters, because the perspective, and the confusion, belongs to Solomon. This is no *Amistad* or *Schindler's List*, tackling the big story, but a personal tale (if you're curious about what happens to supporting characters, forget it). British director Steve McQueen, who developed the film with screenwriter John Ridley, made the fascinating *Hunger* and the literal-minded *Shame*, and there's something deadpan, almost blank, about the way he portrays the fear and malice of this situation. This is effective, even if might occasionally make you wish for the emotion and formal design of a Spielberg.

The film's and-then-this-happened quality is appropriate for a memoir written in the stunned aftermath of a nightmare. As we get to the end, with slivers of hope and disappointment, the result is effective indeed. (I wish a gnarlier actor had played the small but key role taken by Brad Pitt, one of *12 Years*' producers, but it doesn't kill the moment.) Along the way McQueen includes idyllic nature shots of Louisiana, as though to contrast that unspoiled world with what men have done in it. The contrast is lacerating. ROBERT HORTON

Una Noche

RUNS FRI., NOV. 1–THURS., NOV. 7 AT SUNDANCE CINEMAS. NOT RATED. 90 MINUTES.

There are wrenching changes going on in Cuba, as we know. The system of two currencies—one for tourists—is being abandoned. With the Cold War over, former allies like Russia aren't willing to support the island nation. And though the retired Fidel Castro isn't dead yet, the old regime is starting to crack. For that reason, while fairly obvious, Lucy Mulloy's debut feature carries a poignant impact. It follows three teenagers trying to escape the island on a raft to travel the 90 miles to Miami; we know this is a bad plan, and the past-tense narration of Lila (Anailín de la Rúa de la Torre) adds to our sense of foreboding.

It takes an hour for Lila, her brother Elio (Javier Núñez Florián), and his pal Raúl (Dariel Arrechaga) to push off from shore, during which time *Una Noche* gathers an almost documentary weight. Mulloy, a graduate of Oxford and NYU, brought a small crew to Havana to shoot the movie; and all her performers are local. They move through the streets with ease—grabbing onto buses while coasting their bikes; diving off the pier into turquoise waters; stealing supplies and fleeing the cops. The film was clearly filmed with government permission (undoubtedly for a fee), but the script is quite frank about Cuba's problems. Raúl's mother is a prostitute with AIDS. The police beat anyone who dares approach the tourists. The skyline of Havana itself is frozen in a crumbling, 50-year-old stasis. It's a scenic ruin ringed with pristine beaches and palm trees; no wonder visitors come to stay in the gated beachside resorts.

But eventually we have to climb onto the raft and face the swirling sharks (not unlike *All Is Lost*). There, Lila is the sole realist about the situation. If they get to Miami, she says, they'll just end up slaving in a hot kitchen. But there's a terrible and oppressive sense in *Una Noche* that if they stay in Cuba, their fate will be exactly the same. BRIAN MILLER

Viola

RUNS FRI., NOV. 1–THURS., NOV. 7 AT NORTHWEST FILM FORUM. NOT RATED. 66 MINUTES.

My vote for most delightful movie ending of the year goes to Matías Piñeiro's *Viola*, the latest from this spirited young Argentinian director. Even if the film's unfolding is sometimes puzzling, by the time we reach the tuneful conclusion, sheer charm has won the day. Not that it takes long to reach the end. Viola runs just 65 minutes, as though it leaves out the explanatory material that might make its world more accessible. Basically, we meet a group of Buenos Aires young people, many of whom are actors working on a Shakespeare production that includes pieces from different plays. The show has an all-female cast, and the film itself is much more interested in its women than its men. One character, Viola (María Villar, a wonderful straight-faced presence), runs a DVD-pirating service with her boyfriend and delivers her goods by bicycle around the city. The casual storyline comes close to bringing together its different elements when Viola finds herself in a car with two of the actresses from the stage play. This conversation is surreal for a few reasons, but as they go along talking about the possibility that the humble bike messenger might actually star in the play they're working on, you might begin to wish that life really worked like this.

Piñeiro was 30 when he made the film, and it's already his fourth feature—if you count the 43-minute 2011 film *Rosalinda*, which also put Shakespeare rehearsals at the center of a mixed-up plot. His use of literary quotations and elliptical storytelling suggest that he doesn't go along with old-fangled notions of serving up narrative, yet he manages to bring together his threads in oddly satisfying ways. (That's where the delightful ending comes in.) Even when his movies are hard to track, something about them conjures a youthful breezy, try-anything energy. It isn't just larking about—it's more a sense that the old methods aren't working, so let's try something else. This creative underclass of young Argentinians might exist only in Piñeiro's imagination, but that's not a bad place to be. ROBERT HORTON

BY BRIAN MILLER

Local & Repertory

DONNIE DARKO It's 1988 as the Darko family worries about middle child Donnie (Jake Gyllenhaal), who's apparently a paranoid schizophrenic. The teen hears the voices of an imaginary friend, Frank, whom he credits with saving his life. But where is Frank leading him? Increasingly belligerent Donnie begins to look like one of those Columbine kids as he X's off 28 days on his calendar until Halloween. Writer-director Richard Kelly has some crude scores to settle in the 2001 *Donnie Darko*, which partially blames Donnie's madness—if that's what it is—on conservative, Reagan-era middle-American society and a hellish high school. Still, *Donnie Darko* is a powerfully dystopic remix of John Hughes movies and Stephen King novels. **(R)** BRIAN MILLER **Harvard Exit, 807 E. Roy St., 323-0587, landmarktheatres.com, $8.25, midnight, Sat.**

FLOWER BOY DRAMA CLUB Screened in installments, this South Korean soap opera has its hero posing as a gay man. **(NR) Northwest Film Forum, 1515 12th Ave., 829-7863, nwfilmforum.org, $6-$10, Thursdays, 9 p.m. Through Nov. 21.**

- **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH** John Cameron Mitchell's 2001 adaptation of his off-Broadway show is a rollicking, funny, near-classic movie musical. *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* never outruns its origins, nor does it pretend to. Born a boy in East Berlin, young Hansel grows up to suffer a botched sex-change operation and a twofold sense of loss. We learn Hedwig's life story in stops along her band's desultory U.S. tour as she pursues her former lover to claim songwriting royalties and reclaim a piece of her heart. In its debt to Tommy, Marc Bolan, David Bowie, Lou Reed, and Toni Tennille (believe it), the movie is almost impossible not to enjoy. Hedwig takes a simple song of hope and makes it sound like an arena-filling anthem. **(R)** BRIAN MILLER **Central Cinema, 1411 21st Ave., 686-6684, central-cinema.com, $6-$8, Nov. 1-6, 9:30 p.m.**

MUSIC CRAFT: NINE INCH NAILS Trent Reznor and company are captured during their Portland stop on the 2008-09 tour. **(NR) Northwest Film Forum, $6-$10, Thu., Oct. 31, 9 p.m.**

- **NEBRASKA** Here's an early, expensive chance to see Alexander Payne's much-praised new black-and-white movie, starring Bruce Dern and Will Forte as an estranged father and son on a road trip. The movie opens November 22. Some sort of live telecast Q&A will feature the director and stars, along with that insufferable hack Peter Travers, from *Rolling Stone*. **(R) SIFF Cinema Uptown, 511 Queen Anne Ave. N., 324-9996, siff.net, $20-$25, Tue., Nov. 5, 7:45 p.m.**
- **RIDE THE NIGHT** "I can't help myself!" Or, if you want it in the original Berlin slang: "Ich kenn nit wos dafürr!" However it's translated, Peter Lorre's anguished squeal is one of the defining lines of early sound cinema. Playing a compulsive child murderer in Fritz Lang's great 1931 thriller *M* (his first talkie), with the entire criminal underworld helping the cops to catch him, Lorre is the perhaps the most pathetic, tremulous, and weirdly sympathetic serial killer ever committed to film. And maybe the first, Franz Becker fathering a genre that runs through Norman Bates and Hannibal Lecter. Lorre makes this innocuous little man the corrupt emblem of pre-Nazi Germany—not much to look at, but capable of monstrous acts. By 1933, Lorre and Lang would both flee Germany as another unremarkable little fellow came to power. What did they know? Only that Germany was rotten, and the crooks seemed more decent than ordinary citizens. **(NR)** BRIAN MILLER **Seattle Art Museum, 1300 First Ave., 654-3100, seattleartmuseum.org, $63–$88 series, $8 individual, Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. Through Dec. 5.**
- **STRANGERS ON A TRAIN** In Alfred Hitchcock's 1951 suspense classic, tennis player Farley Granger and rich creep Robert Walker meet at random. They then egree, sort of, to exchange ("criss-cross") murders in this bowstring-taut adaptation of the Patricia Highsmith novel. Walker's an out-and-out psycho, but a seductive psycho, as the soft jock Granger discovers. The gay subtext just about subsumes the murder story as one man insinuates himself into the life and conscience of another. As is generally the case with Hitchcock, the sexual and the criminal are bound together with guilt—so you can almost imagine them as lovers before prissy Granger, in a panic, tries to end their sordid affair. **(PG)** BRIAN MILLER **Central Cinema, $6-$8, Nov. 1-6, 7 p.m.**

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THE VISITOR From 1979, this Italian occult picture promises Satanism, suspense, and an oddball cast including John Huston, Shelley Winters, Glenn Ford, Lance Henriksen, and Franco Nero. **(NR) Crowd Illusion, 1403 N.E. 50th St., Seattle, 523-3935, grandillusion-cinema.org, $5-$8, Fri.-Sat. 10 p.m.**

URBAN ELEPHANT Discussion follows this documentary about unhappy pachyderms in captivity. **(NR) Keystone Congregational Church, 5019 Keystone Place N., 632-6021, www.keystoneseattle.org, Free, Fri., Nov. 1, 7 p.m.**

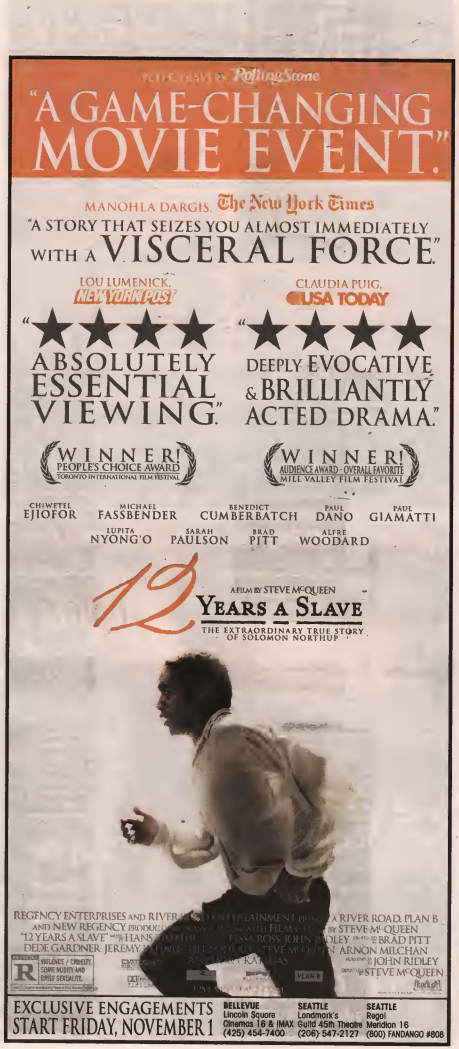
Ongoing

- **ALL IS LOST** Playing an unnamed solo yachtsman shipwrecked in the Indian Ocean, the 77-year-old Robert Redford is truly like The Old Man and the Sea—a taciturn, uncomplaining hero in the Hemingway mold. He represents an old-fashioned tradition of self-reliance and competence. Writer/director J.C. Chandor (*Margin Call*) withholds any personal information about our near-wordless hero, whose stoop is damaged by an errant floating shipping container full of shoes, somehow lost during its journey from China to the U.S. His radio and electronics are flooded, so he calmly and methodically goes about patching his boat while storm clouds gather in the distance. Like *Gravity* and *Captain Phillips*, this is fundamentally a process drama: Character is revealed through action, not words. It's a Shackleton story without the crew to save. For non-sailors, there is a lot of line-pulling, fiberglass repair, water-distilling, and sail-trimming; this can be tedious to watch, but the film shows how survival is often a matter of enduring tedium and loneliness. Here is a small man adrift, stripped of his agency, surviving by his wits. Here, too, is Redford without any Hollywood trappings—no chance to smile or charm. And it's a great performance, possibly his best, a throwback to the silent movies his parents watched. All is lost pushes backward to the primitive: from GPS technology to sextant to drifting raft. It's a simple story, but so in a way was that of Odysseus: epic, stoic, and specific. **(PG-13)** BRIAN MILLER **Seven Gables, Lincoln Square, Meridien, others**
- **BLUE JASMINE** There's nothing comic about the downfall of Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the inspiration for Woody Allen's miscalculated semicom. *Blue Jasmine* is an awkward mismatch of pathos and ridicule, less fusion than simple borrowing. Grafted onto the story of delusional trophy wife Jasmine (Cate Blanchett) is a MadOff-like fable of the recent financial crisis. In flashback, we see her husband (Alec Baldwin) buying her consent with luxury while he swindles the Montauk set. In the present timeframe, Jasmine is broke and living with her sister Ginger (Sally Hawkins) in a shabby San Francisco apartment. Jasmine is a snob who needs to be brought low, a task relished by Ginger, her boyfriend (Bobby Cannavale), and her ex (a surprisingly sympathetic Andrew Dice Clay). As with Baz Luhrmann's recent *The Great Gatsby*, you sense that Allen wents to say something about our present culture of inequality and fraud, but he only dabbles, never probes. Perhaps because her heroine isn't entirely Allen's creation, he doesn't finally know what to do with her. **(PG-13)** BRIAN MILLER **Sundance**
- **CAPTAIN PHILLIPS** Tom Hanks is hijacked and held hostage by Somali pirates, as actually happened to Richard Phillips in 2009, upon whose book this film is based. If you read that account or the newspapers, there's nothing surprising here, though expert director Paul Greengrass—of the Bourne movies and *United 93*—adds as much tension as he can, chiefly through jittery cameras, screaming pirates, and the late-film addition of lethal Navy SEALs. But if I may jump to the end of the movie first: Greengrass and screenwriter Billy Ray do make the interesting decision not to treat that ending triumphantly. What we could not guess is that after more than two days of cool thinking, protecting his crew, calm negotiating, and even coaching his captors, Captain Phillips would finally lose his shit. Before that point, however, he flatters the chief pirate, Muse (Barkhad Abdi), by treating him as an equal. If not quite cogs, they're bit players in the global nexus of commerce and power. Muse says of the warlords who stake him, "I get bosses." "We all got bosses," replies the weary Phillips. In *Captain Phillips*, their conflict is starkly asymmetrical: all our American military might versus four skinny guys with AK-47s. Muse and Phillips are both small men ferrying large assets in the international supply chain. And if they don't like the job, plenty of others will take their place. **(PG-13)** BRIAN MILLER **Ark Lodge, Cinebarre, Kirkland Parkplace, Guild 45th, Lincoln Square, Meridien, Thornton Place, SIFF Cinema Uptown, Bainbridge, others**

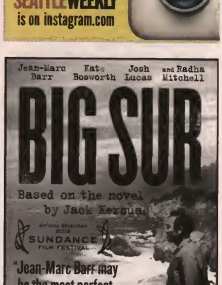
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THE COUNSELOR There are several killing machines in Ridley Scott's treatment of Cormac McCarthy's screenplay, but none are so lethal or inscruteble as Cameron Diaz's Malkina. Here is a woman who keeps two pet cheetahs in El Paso, who says that "to see quarry killed with elegance is moving to me." Her less adroit, more loveable boyfriend (Javier Bardem) is a louche club owner who invests in drug deals organized by the murderous cartels of Ciudad Juarez; just across the Rio Grande. His lawyer (Michael Fassbender) foolishly buys into such a shipment, despite the warnings of a wery middleman (Brad Pitt). After *No Country for Old Men*, we might expect another violent, trenchant McCarthy border tale, sparked by greed and weakness. But that was a Coen brothers project, shrewdly distilled from the novel. *The Counselor* is a miscalculated, all-star anvil of a movie, filled to lead—not bullets (though there are many), but McCarthy's lugubrious-aphorisms end portentous riddles. "I think truth has no temperature," says Malkina. What the fuck does that even mean? She certainly doesn't know. Malkina is one step ahead of everyone else—wired to every phone call, subverting every deal—simply because McCarthy wrote her that wey. She has no character, only a mechanical essence, like the Terminator 3. Fassbender's attorney is soft end bland, and his fiencée (Penélope Cruz) merely provides the not-quite-vestel sheets against which blood must be spattered. Shot in Spain, not Texas, McCarthy's story is both relentless and certoon-deep. **(R)** BRIAN MILLER **Alderwood 16, Pacific Place, Ark Lodge, Big Picture, Kirkland Parkplace, Lincoln Square, Thornton Place, Sundance, Bainbridge, others**

ENOUGH SAID Nothing much happens in a Nicole Holofcener film, and that's OK. *Enough Said* is yet another well-wrought example of her focus on the problems intelligent women create for themselves through their constant worry. Ten years divorced, her daughter soon to leave for college, Eva (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) wearily lugs her message table from client to client, hearing their petty complaints without comment, seemingly resigned to a single woman's slide toward menopause. The large, hairy obstacle in that path is Albert (James Gandolfini), also divorced with a college-bound daughter. Eve has a secret agenda to confirm her doubts about him: Albert's ex-wife (Catherine Keener) is one of her clients. In his last screen role, Gendolfini conveys a lumpy shyness and decency; his Albert is genuinely hurt by the fat-shaming of Eve's yoga-toned cohort. For the women of Enough Said, too much candor has its risks, but remaining silent can bring disester. **(PG-13)** BRIAN MILLER **Pacific Place, Majestic Bay, Sundance, others**

- **GRAVITY** George Clooney and Sandre Bullock are stranded in orbit, menaced by regular bombardments of space debris. The oxygen is running out and there's no prospect of rescue from Earth. Their dilemma is established in an astonishing 12-minute opening sequence, seamlessly rendered via CGI by director Alfonso Cuarón (*Children of Men*, *Y Tu Mamá También*). The camera occupies no fixed position. There is no up or down in the frame as it pushes and swoops among the wreckage and fleeling astronauts. (Here let's note that the 3-D version is essential; don't even consider seeing the conventional rendering.) Dr. Stone (Bullock) at first can't get her beerings; and the rest of the film consists of her navigating from one problem to the next. For all its technical marvels and breathtaking panoramas reflected in Stone's visor, Gravity is a very compact and task-oriented picture. It's both space-age and hugely traditional, though with a modern, self-aware heroine. **(PG-13)** BRIAN MILLER **Alderwood 16, Woodinville, Southcenter, Cinebarre, Redmond Town Center, Kirkland Parkplace, Lincoln Squere, Majestic Bay, Meridian, Thornton Place, SIFF Cinema Uptown, Sundance, others**
- **WADJDA** In making the first feature by a Saudi women, Haifaa Al-Mensour shot some of the exterior scenes from the inside of a ven, because a woman working with men in public is not looked on with favor in Riyedh. Her struggles are more then good journalistic copy; they explain the controlled ferocity of the movie's storytelling, which is a coded version of the making of the film itself. Desperate to own a bicycle, Wadjda energizes the movie. She's a smert end innately rebellious 10-year-old—a stock character, perhaps, but not in Waad Mohammed's performance. Her insolent body language and exasperated eye-rolling mark Wadjda as a hilariously recognizable 21st-century child. Wadjda's father has left their home because her mother is unable to supply more children. Al-Mansour makes her points without caricaturing her characters; the father, for instance, is werm end kind, if weak. Her film could not exist if it were a screed, but even the casual depiction of inequality is infuriating. **(PG)** ROBERT HORTON **Harvard Exit**

Child of Reinvention

With their debut, Ayron Jones and The Way conjure the style of Stevie Ray Vaughan, the support of Sir Mix-a-Lot, and the specter of Nirvana.

BY MARK BAUMGARTEN



Ayron Jones, without The Way.

PHOTO BY LAURA LEIA

Ayron Jones is indebted. And he knows it—

"I've heard people try to emulate what Stevie Ray Vaughan did, and even myself," the 27-year-old Seattle musician says. "I can try to emulate licks and stuff like that, but I don't do what he did in terms of how he could portray emotion through every single note. Man, that guy could play one note and just make it sing."

In the past year, Jones, who leads his band The Way, has earned numerous comparisons to the iconic blues-rock guitarist for his considerable guitar work, a fluid, emotive style rendered with acrobatic flair. This combination of skill and showmanship has earned the Roosevelt High School grad a number of accolades, including a top finish in the 2012 Hard Rock Rising contest and the attention of Anthony Ray, the artist better known as Sir Mix-a-Lot. Urged by a friend, Ray went to see the band at a U District club. As he walked up, he could hear the sound of The Way bleeding out onto the sidewalk.

"I would say they were all 50- to 55-year-old white guys, and I mean that in a good way," Ray recalls. "The quality of what they were playing was insane and very Stevie Ray Vaughan–esque, [the] rhythm section just sounded beautiful, and I thought it was five guys. Then I walk in and it's just three black dudes; the oldest one was only 28. I was like, wow. Then I turned to my friend who brought me and said, 'Who's recording them?' and he said, 'No one's recorded them yet.' That blew my mind."

That wasn't entirely true. The band had done a little recording and posted an EP's worth of songs online. Soon after Ray heard them, though, that EP was offline and the band was preparing to enter Mix-a-Lot Studios to work on its first proper full-length album. That album, *Dream*, was released earlier this week, the product of a pains-taking process.

"We had to record this album three times over," Jones recalls. "The first time we recorded the music [Ray] was impressed with the skill of the music, but it wasn't quite music and it wasn't quite something that we were going to be able to push out and market and sell to people. He definitely challenged me to recreate or evolve the way that I wrote and the way that I heard music."

The eight-song LP is being touted by the Jones camp as a mix of Vaughan and Nirvana, an edgier update of blues rock that reverberates with the Seattle sound. Some critics have drawn comparisons to Jimi Hendrix, though those seem more based on cultural ideas than actual style.

A more fitting analogy might be to another band-leading guitarist who also courted Hendrix comparisons: Ben Harper. Jones' dynamic loud-soft songs, singed with athletic guitar solos, recall Harper's aggressive middle-era work more than anything else. Both men have been influenced deeply by the blues and set afire by the aggression and angst of the '90s.

Of course, Harper was creating his impassioned soul songs *in* the '90s. Ayron Jones and The Way, on the other hand, is tasked with updating that sound. *Dream*, though more rooted in traditional blues rock than Ray or Jones are willing to let on, moves in that direction by introducing a more bombastic low end from the band's hip-hop producer and some grit and grunge from its home-town's not-too-distant past. The latter is most clear on closing track "Aberdeen," an instrumental ode to something old that manages to sound like something new.

"What I was trying to do was capture the angst and the influence of Nirvana and the whole Seattle punk and grunge scene," Jones says. "I just wanted to capture that and put it into an instrumental and use my guitar as a paintbrush, so to speak." **SW**

mbaumgarten@seattleweekly.com

AYRON JONES
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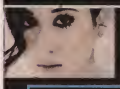

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• 10/31 MCTUFF ALBUM RELEASE SHOW, CRACK SABBATH
• 11/2 LAKE STREET DIVE, MISS TESS & THE TALKBACKS
• 11/3 THE DEFIBULATORS, TEKLA WATERFIELD, THE LOWEST PAIR
• 11/6 DUTCH HARE ALBUM RELEASE SHOW, SUPERCROW, ANDY FITTS
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SevenNights

EDITED BY GWENDOLYN ELLIOTT

Wednesday, Oct. 30

CHARLI XCX At 21, pop/R&B singer Charlotte Aitchison is a music-biz veteran. Her first professional recordings came at age 14, and her name has been bandied about on music blogs since time immemorial (so, like, 2008). Her long-awaited sophomore album *True Romance* nicely bridges the gap between pleasure pop and electronic experimentation. With Kitten, Liz. Neumos, 925 E. Pike St., 709-9442, neumos.com. 8 p.m. $12 adv. ANDREW GOSPE

JANELLE MONÁE pays attention to detail. You can see it in the way she presents herself: the crisp white tuxedo shirt and black slacks, perfectly coiffed hair often tucked beneath a porkpie hat. You can hear it in her songs: sultry vocals laid over a smorgesbord of sounds that bounce among funk, soul, jazz, and pop. Most of all, it's in the elaborate production of her out-of-this-world live show, the ultimate packaging of her entertainment aesthetic. There, the successful universe the artist built on her debut EP, Metropolis: *Suite I*; her first studio album, *The ArchAndroid*; and now the critically acclaimed *The Electric Lady* is a cinematic, android-friendly realm of sensory overload, and an unparalleled live experience. Watching all these details come together onstage makes the 27-year-old artist's recent Billboard nod—just ranked its 2013 Rising Star—a well-earned distinction. With Roman GianArthur. Showbox SoDo, 1700 First Ave. S., 652-0444, showboxonline.com. 9 p.m. $27. All ages, bar 21 & over with ID. KEEGAN PROSSER

Thursday, Oct. 31

THE ACCÜSED For this Halloween show, the legendary crossover thrash band will mash up members from its 30-year career, including founding member Tommy Niemeyer and former vocalist Brad Mowen. This self-described splattercore band is the perfect soundtrack for All Hallows' Eve: dark riffs, blood-soaked lyrics, and it's loud as hell. With Millhous, Triple Sixes. Chop Suey, 1325 E. Madison St., 324-8005, chopsuey.com. 8 p.m. $5 adv/$8 DOS. DAVE LAKE

HELL'S BELLES Thirteen years and thousands of shows across the world have instilled serious rock-'n'-roll 'tude into this all-female AC/DC tribute band, whose members reside in Washington and Texas. If you're lame and doubt its skills, know that Angus Young, in a 2003 interview with *Blender*, called the quintet the best AC/DC cover band he's heard. With HalloQueen, Belles Bent for Leather. Showbox at the Market, 1426 First Ave., 628-3151, showboxpresents.com. 8 p.m. $20. 21 and over. AZARIA C. POOPLESKY

HOODIE ALLEN may be 2013's answer to Asher Roth—or he could be the next Mac Miller (it's up to you which of those would be preferable). Regardless, Allen's white-boy party rap straddles the line between cheesy and clever in just the right way. Case in point: the catchy-as-hell yet snarkily sex-obsessed "Two Lips." With OCD: Mooah & Twist, D-Why, Shelton Harris & Tyler Oopps. Showbox SoDo. 7:30 p.m. $25. All ages, 21 & over bar with ID. KP

I WILL KEEP YOUR GHOST Bryan Bradley and Aaron Coughlin combine fuzzy guitar riffs with synths and electronic beats perfect for the dance floor. The duo is in the studio finishing its new EP, *It's Natural*, slated for a November release, which was funded through a Kickstarter campaign. With Gold Wolf Galaxy, Gems. Sunset Tavern, 5433 Ballard Ave. N.W., 784-4880, sunsettavern.com. 9 p.m. $7. All ages. ACP

Friday, Nov. 1

WHITE LUNG Ironically, this Vancouver-based punk band wrote on its Facebook page earlier this month that this tour will likely be the last time it plays songs from its latest album, Sorry, which was released last year. The good news: The trio will soon be ready to head back into the studio to work on more material. With Antwon. Barboza, 925 E. Pike St., 709-9467, thebarboza.com. 7 p.m. $10. 21 and over. ACP

GRUMPY OLD BEAR RECORDS SHOWCASE Brandon Lorrekovich, Art Lipatan, Andy Glover, and Grumpy Old Bear president Norm Bowler are scheduled to perform at this showcase, highlighting some of the area's best acoustic pop. On the event's Facebook page, there's a hint that performers might team up for a song or two, so arrive early, stay late, and expect the unexpected. Café Racer, 5828 Roosevelt Way N.E., 523-5282, caferacerseattle.com. 9 p.m. Free. All ages until 11 p.m. ACP

THE DWARVES It may be the day after Halloween, but Dwarves guitarist HeWhoCannotBeNamed will definitely still be in his costume: a Mexican wrestling mask and nothing else—well, besides his guitar. With Poison Idea, Toxic Holocaust, The Insurgence, Toe Tag. El Corazon, 109 Eastlake Ave. E., 262-0482, elcorazon.com. 8 p.m. $13 adv./$15 DOS. DL



COURTESY THE ARTIST

Earl Sweatshirt
Wednesday, Oct. 30

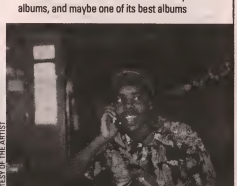
The world's introduction to Earl Sweatshirt came in a music video.

"Earl," released in 2010, presaged teenage rap collective Odd Future's rapid, Internet-based rise in 2011, and helped to establish the group's penchant for attention-grabbing antics. It features a 16-year-old Sweatshirt enacting a bizarre drug-overdose fever dream with the rest of the Odd Future crew. They blend a plethora of toxic and illicit substances, drink their concoction, then hit the skate park. The whole thing has a snuff-film quality to it, and Sweatshirt's sadistic lyrics—touching on rape, murder, and cannibalism—stand out more than his rapping.

Fast-forward three years, and the opposite is true: Earl Sweatshirt is known as one of hip-hop's most promising young artists, largely because he's a very, very good rapper. But now there's some distance between him and Odd Future—at the insistence of his mother, a university professor—and by the time the group reached the apex of its popularity, he was attending a boarding school in American Samoa.

The rapper's newfound stature as a solo artist holds true on *Doris*. (It was in fact released on Columbia rather than on Odd Future's own record label.) And though it features constant guest spots from Odd Future members, it speaks to his talent and artistic maturity. His rhymes are deliberate and labyrinthine, delivered in a lackadaisical drawl that belies their density. The beats are stark and raw-sounding, typically little more than a bass line and a drum machine. Most impressive, however, is Sweatshirt's growth as a lyricist. He's moved on from juvenile shock-value fantasies to more autobiographical material, his honesty more hard-earned than trite.

Doris amounts to one of 2013's best rap albums, and maybe one of its best albums



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

period. (If anything, it will make whatever you were doing at age 19 feel seriously inadequate.) Tonight marks the MC's second visit to Washington this year, and, based on the largely positive reviews of his Sasquatch! set in May, his album's excellence extends to the stage. ***With Vince Staples.*** **The Neptune, 1303 N.E. 45th St., 784-4849, stgpresents.org. 9 p.m. $21.50 adv./$25 DOS. All ages.** ANDREW GOSPE

DEF LEPRECHAUN is not a Def Leppard cover band comprising little people, but a Celtic bar band comprising old men from Nashville who play songs about "Galloway Girls," mermaids, and getting sloshed Irish-style. When that little people Def Leppard cover band does come through town, however, *Seattle Weekly* will be all over it. With The JV. Rendezvous, 2322 Second Ave., 441-5823, jewelboxtheater.com. 10 p.m. $8. 21 and over. KELTON SEARS

TOUCHÉ AMORÉ This show's headliner is AFI, the soundtrack to many a 20-something's high-school Hot Topic phase, but more interesting will be Los Angeles band Touché Amoré's cathartic post-hardcore. September's *Is* Survived By is an old-school emo throwback—raw, confessional, and melodic, but in a way that could appeal to adults, too. With Coming. Showbox at the Market. 8 p.m. SOLD OUT. All ages. AG

CURTAINS FOR YOU The pop duo led by the handsome and affable Gervais brothers bids itself adieu tonight. It's for good reason. While the band has been filling Seattle clubs with its throwback harmonic power-pop songs and opening shows for bands including The Head and the Heart and the Posies, drummer Dave Lawrence has been working on his Ph.D. in fisheries. Despite the band's skin-thwacking demands, he recently mounted a successful defance of his thesis, and is now on his way to some workish gig in Washington, D.C. Brothers Matt and Mike Gervais will continue with their strummier and mellower Mikey & Matty project, but tonight it's curtains for Curtains for You. With Hannelea and Not Amy. Sunset Tavern, 5433 Ballard Ave. N.W., 784-4880, sunsettavern.com. 9 p.m. $8. MARK BAUMGARTEN

SLAYER Want to keep your Halloween hangover going? With 30-plus years of the hardest, fastest metal on the planet under its studded belt, Slayer will tear through classics as well as material from 2009's *World Painted Blood*, which Pitchfork called "the best album to come from the Big Four of Thrash since the 1990s." With Gojira, 4ARM. WaMu Theater, 800 Occidental Ave. S. 381-7555. 7:30 p.m. $40 adv./$45 DOS. DI.

Send events to music@seattleweekly.com.
See seattleweekly.com for full listings.

Saturday, Nov. 2

GRAM PARSONS TRIBUTE Tuesday would have been Gram Parsons' 67th birthday, and one can only imagine what all the cosmic musician would have accomplished by now if he hadn't been cut down in 1973. Tonight Country Dave and a bar full of deeply indebted musicians will honor his memory by attempting to recreate the innovative mix of country, rock, and blues that the man created as a member of the Byrds and the Flying Burrito Brothers and on his own before his death at age 26. If you've got a Nudie suit, wear it. Conor Byrne, 5140 Ballard Ave. N.W., 784-3640, conorbyrne pub.com. 9 p.m. $12. MB

Sunday, Nov. 3

BUDDY GUY Touring behind his latest record, the oh-so-apropos *Rhythm and Blues*, the last great representative of the fabled Chicago-based Chess Records is back to prove one thing and one thing only—you're damn right he's still got the blues! Snoqualmie Casino, 37500 S.E. North Bend Way, Snoqualmie, 425-888-1234, snocasino.com. 7 p.m. $40.55. CORBIN REIFF

Monday, Nov. 4

MAZZY STAR After three well-received albums, this '90s cult band quietly parted and its two core members, Hope Sandoval and David Roback, went on to pursue other projects. Now reunited, the group's latest, Seasons of Your Day, ends the 17-year gap in its discography, but its re-emergence does raise the question of relevance. Fortunately, the timing is good. The new-folk-saturated market—and the zeitgeist with it—has given way to more nuanced sounds, and the dream-pop groundwork laid by Mazzy Star's three seminal albums ('90's *She Hangs Brightly*, '93's *So Tonight That I Might See*, and '96's *Among My Swan*) has lately been reprised by bands like Beach House and Pure Bathing Culture. You couldn't be faulted if you thought Seasons was produced by a new group breaking onto the scene; but in fact it's this pair, now squarely middle-aged (he is 55, she is 46), that over two decades ago seamlessly fused

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THIS FRI! NOV 1
COLUMBIA CITY THEATER
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RAMS POCKET RADIO
THIS SAT! NOV 2
MIKE DOUGHTY
(USED TO BE IN SOUL COUGHING)
WHOLE SHOW OF SONGS FROM EL OSO, RUBY VROOM & IRRESISTIBLE BLISS
MOON HOOCH
NEXT WEEK! NOV 5
ONES TO WATCH PRESENTS
TWENTY ONE PILOTS
ROBERT DELONG SIRAH
SAT NOV 9
THE LONELY FOREST
CUMULUS BELLAMAINE
NOV 11
ATLAS GENIUS
FAMILY OF THE YEAR
OALE EARNHARDT JR. JR.
NOV 14
FRUIT BATS
PERFORMING MOUTHFULS
IN ITS ENTIRETY (10TH ANNIVERSARY)
THE GONKEYS
FRI NOV 15
JESSIE WARE
THE INVISIBLE
NOV 17
NEUMOS
CULTS
SACCO & MOOD RINGS
NOV 20
VIENNA TENG
ALEX WONG & BARNABY BRIGHT
NOV 21
BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY
GRYNCH & COOL NUTZ
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FRI NOV 29
BLACK JOE LEWIS
RAOKEY & THINK NO THINK
SAT NOV 30
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psychedelic, drone-addled, Doors-esqua anthems with a '60s laissez-faire style, perfectly captured by Sandoval's dreamy, languid vocals. On Seasons, the band resumes the vibe: Gentle acoustic strumming is fleshed out with noodly, bluesy electric guitar, walls of psychedelic reverb, hypnosis-inducing drums, and Sandoval's still-youthful vocals. But with age comes wisdom; now things sound cleaner, tighter, and, yes, all the more seasoned. With The Entrance Band, Mariee Sioux. The Neptune, 1303 N.E. 45th St., 682-1414, stgpresents.org/neptune. 8 p.m. $35. GWENDOLYN ELLIOTT

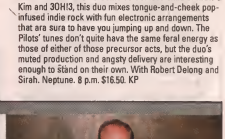
SEPULTURA Tonight this long-running Brazilian metal act will focus on songs from its 13th LP, the just-released *The Mediator Between Head and Hands Must Be the Heart*—which is the first to feature new drummer Eloy Casagrande, and which was produced by Ross Robinson, who last worked with the band on 1996's *Roots*. With Unearth, Kataklysm, Scar the Martyr, Dark Sermon, Lesbian. Neumos. 6 p.m. $25 adv. DL

IRON AND WINE Following 2011's *Kiss Each Other Clean*, Sam Beam has continued to explore his brighter side. His fifth studio album, *April's Ghost on Ghost*, features the same intimate voice fans know and love, only now set against a jazzier, poppier, upbeat backdrop. With Laura Mvula. The Paramount, 911 Pine St., 682-1414, stgpresents.org/paramount. 7:30 p.m. $25.50. All ages. ACP

Tuesday, Nov. 5

TWENTY ONE PILOTS Some sort of love child of Matt & Kim and 3OH!3, this duo mixes tongue-and-cheek pop-infused indie rock with fun electronic arrangements that are sure to have you jumping up and down. The Pilots' tunes don't quite have the same feral energy as those of either of those precursor acts, but the duo's muted production and angsty delivery are interesting enough to stand on their own. With Robert Delong and Sirah. Neptune. 8 p.m. $16.50. KP

Mike Doughty
Saturday, November 2


SARAH FORBES VEDDH

Mike Doughty doesn't exactly know why he's doing what he's doing on his current tour, but he's doing it anyway. He's excavating songs from his '90s alt-rock band Soul Coughing—a group that not only steered him heavily into drugs, but one to which he ultimately signed away his rights to the music he'd written. In the two decades since Soul Coughing split, the balding, bespectacled 43-year-old has built a respected solo career, but has been devoutly distancing himself from the three albums he made with the group. Doughty was so sour on his old band that he often lashed out at fans who dared to mention it to him, both on- and offstage. But—like John Fogerty, who for many years refused to play Creedence Clearwater Revival songs—Doughty has had a change of heart.

In his 2012 autobiography, *The Book of Drugs*, Doughty wrote candidly about his fondness for illegal substances and his not-so-fondness for his former bandmates, refusing to call them by name, opting instead for simply "the drummer," "the bass player," and "the sampler player." But the writing process excised some demons. "[The book]," he wrote recently in *The New York Times*, "was deeply supportive of the new self I was trying to become. At some point, though, I began to wonder if I could ever again own my old Soul Coughing songs—not legally, but in my own heart." To start the process, Doughty crowd-funded an album of reworked versions of 13 Soul Coughing tracks. He wasn't sure what the fan response would be, but the album was fully funded just 16 hours after being announced.

For this tour, Doughty will play nothing but Soul Coughing songs, playing guitar, singing, and triggering samples accompanied by an upright bassist and a drummer. The experience so far, he wrote in the *Times*, has been transformative. "Every time I play a song, there are microscopic alterations in how I phrase this or that word, or play a chord. Over years, it can amount to radical evolution."

There's a sense that the evolution of the songs is helping Doughty's personal growth as well. Perhaps, sometime on the next tour, the songwriter will combine work from his pre- and post-Soul Coughing days, giving fans a look at the scope of his output that's not as compartmentalized as it appears now. As it stands, here's hoping that if you go see him tonight and request "27 Jennifers"—one of his solo songs—you won't get chastised. ***With Moon Hooch.*** **The Neptune, 1303 N.E. 45th St., 682-1414, stg presents.org/neptune. 8 p.m. $25.** DAVE LAKE

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Doors at 6 / Show at 9PM
21+, $13 ADV / $15 DOS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3
OH MERCY
with These Young Fools, Rough People, Those Red Hands, plus guests
Lounge Show. Doors at 7 / Show at 7:30PM
ALL AGES/BAR W/D. $8 ADV / $10 DOS

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1
El Corazon Presents The Dwarves Aftershow Party Featuring Live Music From:
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Music begins immediately after the Dwarves show in the main showroom
21+. Lounge Show. FREE

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4
THE BALCONIES
with The Motorleague, plus guests
Lounge Show. Doors at 7 / Show at 7:30PM
ALL AGES/BAR W/D. $8 ADV / $10 DOS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2
Mike Thrasher Presents:
THE STORY SO FAR
with Stick To Your Guns, Such Gold, Rotting Out, Fat Souvenirs
Doors at 6 / Show at 6:30PM
ALL AGES/BAR W/D. $16 ADV / $18 DOS

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5
KILL DEVIL HILL (featuring Rez Abbasi (Pantera/Downy and Vinny Appice (Dio/Black Sabbath))
with Eyes Set To Kill, Girl On Fire, Black Water Rising, American Wrecking Company, and Tatarus. Doors at 6:30 / Show at 7PM
ALL AGES/BAR W/D. $15 ADV / $18 DOS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2
El Corazon Presents The Story So Far Aftershow Party Featuring Live Music From:
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Music begins immediately after The Story So Far show in the main showroom
21+. Lounge Show. FREE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7
Mike Thrasher Presents:
MAYDAY PARADE with Man Overboard, Cartel, and Stages & Stereos
Lounge Show. Doors at 6 / Show at 6:30PM
ALL AGES/BAR W/D. $22 ADV / $25 DOS

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Tickets for shows with no on-sale date listed are not on sale yet. Please check back or sign up for our newsletter to be notified when they go on sale. Tickets are available at the box office Tues-Sat from noon to 6pm and two hours before all ages shows are open to the public. Online orders are open to the public - $2 service charge per ticket. Charge by Phone at 1 800 514 3849. Outline of venue: elcorazonseattle.com - Tickets are subject to service charge

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TOKESIGNALS
BY STEVE ELLIOTT

Up District medical-marijuana access point **Natural Green Medicine** is in the heart of a vibrant, friendly neighborhood, plus it's close to the freeway, across the street from University Volkswagen. The only fly in the ointment is that parking can be a little challenging in these parts, so you may have to find a spot a few blocks away, which can of course be problematic for those with limited mobility.

Top-shelf flower strains at Natural Green Medicine are $12; while I'd rather pay $9 or $10 as in some other shops, that is really my only other criticism of this place. And if I'm going to pay $12 a gram, I want it to be as good as the two strains I tried—and with the assistance of someone as knowledgeable and helpful as budtender Janet.



STEVE ELLIOTT

With her help, I selected the sativa-dominant strain (and current popular sensation) Girl Scout Cookies and the indica-dominant hybrid Platinum Bubba Kush, both $12 strains. While Janet was weighing these out, I had a chance to check out the HempZen Oils cannabis capsules, the "0.5 gm" version of which is $5; I decided to give one a try, and discovered that evening that these things are excellent sleep aids, and well worth the money.

The Girl Scout Cookies flowers are strikingly tasty. I don't know if they really tasted like any kind of cookies or not, but I do know they were really sweet, with a pleasant flavor that lingers on the lips and palate and lasts more than halfway through a joint. And speaking of halfway through a joint: If you make it that far, you are likely to be quite medicated. Even with my elevated tolerance, I got high from GSC in addition to getting pain relief. About three-quarters of the way through my test joint, I came to the additional conclusion that this was the best weed I've smoked in weeks.

I half-expected a letdown after that elevated experience, but the Platinum Bubba Kush was having no part of that. Its frosty flowers provided an indica wallop of satisfying solidity, pummeling away pain and knocking out nausea within a few tokes. Not to be outdone taste-wise by the Cookies, PB Kush also is a superlatively delicious strain; and although it's definitely an indica-dominant strain with solid pain relief and insomnia-relieving capabilities, it doesn't neglect the higher centers of your brain. For an indica, it is an intellectually interesting strain, leading you down winding pathways of medicated mentation.

First-time patients get a free Better Butter Bon Bon in either white or milk chocolate—delicious and, for their diminutive size, surprisingly strong. Don't forget to check out Natural Green Medicine's cooler of medible treats, which start at a reasonable $6 donation.

Steve Elliott edits Toke Signals, tokesignals.com, an irreverent, independent blog of cannabis news, views, and information.
tokesignals@seattleweekly.com

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Professor Joanna Shepherd-Bailey of the Emory University School of Law conducted an independent study of Initiative 522 and found that: **"Consumers will see no increase in prices as a result of the relabeling required by Initiative 522."**

The two reports being citied by the No on 522 campaign are not independent studies. They were commissioned and paid for by the opposition. **The No on 522 campaign paid the Washington Research Council and Northbridge Environmental Management Consultants over $60,000 for their work.**

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